

The Salmon's Dream: Mixed Media Collages

TOPICS: Representing texture through creating a rubbing; Using stencils; Creating abstract imagery; Using warm and cool colours

SUBJECT(S): Visual Arts

GRADE(S): K-4

UNIT DURATION: 3 lessons



Charlene Vickers, *Fish in Astral Projection under Moons*, 2022, 7 colour, 6 plate intaglio print, 40cm x 45cm.

painting, sculpture, and performance works explore memory, healing, and embodied connections to ancestral lands. Vickers' works has been exhibited across Canada and the United States. Vickers holds a BFA from Emily Carr University of Art and Design, a BA in Critical Studies of the Arts and MFA from Simon Fraser University.

Fish in Astral Projection under Moons (2022) was produced using a technique called soft ground lift, where the texture of fabrics (felt, foam, and cloth) selected by Vickers and her hand sewing was

OVERVIEW & CULMINATING TASK:

In this lesson students will learn about an intaglio print by Canadian artist Charlene Vickers.

Students will create a mixed media collage using stencils and techniques for drawing, painting, and representing textures.

Charlene Vickers is an Anishinaabe artist living and working in Vancouver. Born in Kenora, Ontario and raised in Toronto, her

transferred into the soft ground and then etched into the plate.

The fish silhouette is a copper plate cut into the shape of the fish and aquatinted to achieve the rich black colour and texture. Aquatint is a printmaking technique that produces tonal effects by using acid to eat into the printing plate creating sunken areas which hold the ink. The final piece to this work is the addition of a button that is hand sewn to the printing paper.

BIG IDEAS (What students will understand):

- Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice (Arts Education)

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES (What students will do):

- Explore elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, and techniques of the arts
- Describe and respond to works of art
- Create artistic works using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS:

- **Science:** moon phases, salmon life cycle
- **Social Studies:** culture, history, and territories of the Anishinaabeg peoples

CONCEPTS & CONTENT (What students will know):

- Image development strategies
- Elements of visual art; principles of design

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) (What students will keep considering):

- What do salmon dream of?
- How can I design a dream-like environment in a work of art using texture, colour, and techniques inspired by the art of Charlene Vickers?



Charlene Vickers signs editions of her finished print

FIRST PEOPLES' PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING:

Learning is embedded in memory, history and story.

IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING:

- Provide options for recruiting interest (i.e. sketching, writing, small group and whole group discussion, story workshop activity)
- Provide options for language and symbols by illustrating the art activity using multiple media (i.e. share images and videos of Vickers' artwork and process, demonstrate project steps visually, and provide verbal and written instructions)
- Ask questions to guide self-monitoring and reflection using the suggested reflection questions connecting to the core competencies and the suggested questions for student reflection

MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGIES:

- digital images of Charlene Vickers' print and her creation process (see end of document)
- digital projector/computer
- 9" x 6" pieces of construction paper in assorted colours (2 per student)
- 4.5" x 3" piece of construction paper in assorted colours (1 per student)
- 4.5" x 3" piece of black construction paper (1 per student)
- 8.5" x 5.5" pieces of white printer paper (letter size cut in half) (2 per student)
- dark coloured oil pastels, such as black, dark blue, dark green, purple (1 per student)
- pencils (1 per student)
- glue sticks
- scissors (1 per student)
- pencil crayons in a variety of colours
- watercolour sets (optional)
- watercolour brushes
- water pots
- class set of printed ovoid tracers (see end of document)
- class set of printed salmon tracers (see end of document)

VOCABULARY:

intaglio print, etching, stencil, aquatint, textile, silhouette, ovoid, astral, lunar, hand stitching, warm and cool colours

RESOURCES & REFERENCES:

- Learn more about Charlene Vickers' print and watch videos about the creation process:
[https://www.sd44.ca/school/artistsforkids/Shop/CharleneVickers/Pages/default.aspx#/="](https://www.sd44.ca/school/artistsforkids/Shop/CharleneVickers/Pages/default.aspx#/=)
- Learn more about Charlene Vickers and her art: <https://mfineart.ca/macaulay-co-fine-art/artists/charlene-vickers/>



- Learn more about the Anishinabek Nation here:
<https://www.anishinabek.ca/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/>
- Learn more about the intaglio printmaking process here:
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/special-topics-art-history/creating-conserving/printmaking/v/moma-intaglio-process>

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITIES (Teacher Action/Student Action):

LESSON #1 (intro to Charlene Vickers and salmon stencil):

- Project Charlene Vickers' print in classroom and have students discuss it with partners or in small groups, using the following questions as prompts:
 - What do you see in this artwork?
 - Describe the shapes the artist has included.
 - Describe the textures the artist has included.
 - Where is this fish?
 - What do you know about the life cycle of a salmon?
 - What shapes or colours might guide a salmon on its journey back to its birth place?
 - From your learning and experience, what do you think a salmon might dream about?
 - Can you remember the colours and textures in your dreams?
 - What do you know about the lunar cycles or moon phases?
 - Have you seen the moon in each of its eight phases?
 - Describe the moons that the artist included in this print.
- Have students report back on their discussion to the whole group.
- Optionally have students respond to selected discussion prompts in writing.
- Optionally have students sketch the print using pencil crayons and white paper.
- Share with students process images and videos of the print being created (see Resources & References section and images at end of document). Share information about intaglio printmaking.
- Share with students that they will create a mixed-media collage in which they design their own dream-like environment for a salmon, inspired by Vickers' print and process.
- OPTIONAL: Fish Story Workshop
 - Share with students that Charlene Vickers spent time with the fish stencil for her print by displaying it in multiple locations in her studio.



Fish silhouette used for Vickers' print

-So that students get to know the salmon stencil they will use in their own artwork, distribute pre-cut salmon stencils (cut from black construction paper).

-Give students assorted collage materials (i.e. scrap fabric, paper, textured recycled materials).

-Have students work independently or in small groups to create layered environments for their salmon using these materials.

-Alternatively, students could bring their salmon stencils outside and create environments for them on the ground using leaves, rocks, sticks, etc.

-Students can move their salmon stencils through these environments and act out stories within them.

LESSON #2 (designing dream environment and creating rubbing):



Materials used by Vickers to create plate for printing

- Share with students that they will create an environment for their salmon as the first step of their art project.

- Ask the students: How many moons did Vickers include in her print?

- Charlene Vickers created her moons out of felt, foam, and cloth (textiles) to create different textures in the print.



Different possible ways of arranging the moons and salmon

- Discuss Charlene's use of the ovoid in her print. Have students observe and point out the ovoid shapes she used.

- The ovoid is a shape often used in artwork by Indigenous artists of the Northwest Coast. Concave on the base and convex on the top, the corners are rounded.

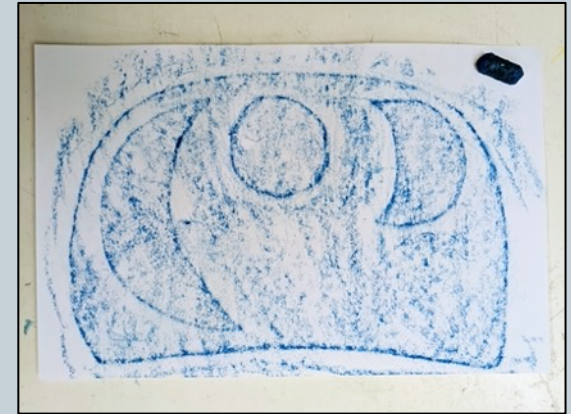
- Have the students use the ovoid tracer (provided at end of document) to trace and cut out one large ovoid shape from a 9" x 6" piece of construction paper.

- Have students draw then cut out 3 moons from a 4.5" x 3" piece of construction paper (moons can vary in size and shape).

- If students do not yet have a salmon stencil, have them use the salmon tracer to trace and then cut out a salmon from a piece of black 4.5" x 3" piece of construction paper.

- Have students arrange their 3 moons on their construction paper ovoid. Students should decide where their salmon will be placed in their composition. The moons and the salmon should not overlap. Students can experiment with several compositions before gluing down their moons (they will NOT glue down their salmon, at this point).

- Show students how to create a rubbing of their design using a dark oil pastel (i.e. dark blue, dark green, dark purple). Students should use the edge, NOT the tip of the pastel to create the rubbing. They should aim to capture the outlines of each of their collaged shapes.



Rubbing created using construction paper composition and blue oil pastel



The rubbing is glued on one side of a 9" x 6" sheet of construction paper and the original ovoid composition is glued on the other side

- Provide students with 2 pieces of 8.5" x 5.5" white printer paper so they can practice their technique for creating rubbings and choose their favourite rubbing to include in their artwork.
- Once students have completed their rubbings, they should cut out around the edge of their large ovoid.
- Students should then glue their rubbing onto the middle of a 9" x 6" piece of construction paper (students may choose from several colours of paper).
- Students should glue their construction paper ovoid with 3 moons and a small ovoid on the opposite side of the 9" x 6" piece of construction paper.

LESSON #3 (drawing and painting details and gluing salmon stencil):



Printing plate and other materials

- Have the students observe Vickers' print and look for details that were created using hand stitching (refer to the images of Vickers' process at the end of this document). Show students how to draw simple hand stitches on the board (i.e. herringbone, running stitch, blanket stitch, cross stitch).
- Have students use dark pencil crayons (i.e. blue, green, purple) to draw stitching details around the inside edge of their ovoid and inside of their moons (see example to the right).

- Have the students observe Vickers' print and discuss the colours that she used for her moons.
- Share with students information about warm and cool colours (i.e. warm colours include yellow, red, orange, and pink and cool colours include purple, blue, turquoise, and green).

- Demonstrate how to paint the moons using warm colours of watercolour paint.
- Demonstrate how to use the paint in a transparent (rather than opaque) way, so that the texture of the oil pastel and the stitching details still show through. Paints should be mixed with sufficient water in order to achieve this effect.
- Demonstrate how to paint around the moons using one cool colour (using the paint in a transparent way).



Draw hand stitching using dark pencil crayons

- Have students draw hand stitching details around the outside of their ovoid on the construction paper while they wait for their paint to dry (see example below).
- Once their paint is dry, have students glue down their salmon stencil.



Completed teacher sample with moons and space around them painted with a transparent layer of watercolour paint

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISPLAYING STUDENT ARTWORK:

Completed student artwork can be displayed in a grid on a bulletin board. Alternatively, artwork can be hung from the ceiling, in order to display the front and back sides of the artwork (holes can be punched in top 2 corners, with string looped through). When displaying the student art, it is important to credit the influence of Charlene Vickers' style and artwork. Optional caption to include with the display:

Our class learned about the Canadian artist Charlene Vickers and her intaglio print *Fish in Astral Projection under Moons*. Inspired by this print, we have created our own collages representing a salmon and moons. We used stencils and techniques for drawing, painting, and representing textures.

CORE COMPETENCIES (suggested questions for reflection):

- COMMUNICATION: What textures, shapes, lines, and colours did Charlene Vickers include in the environment around her fish in order to communicate a feeling and place?
- THINKING: Describe the techniques you used in creating your artwork that are inspired by techniques Charlene Vickers used to create her print?
- PERSONAL AND SOCIAL: What differences and similarities can you observe between the collages that you and your classmates created?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT REFLECTION:

Teachers are invited to adapt and edit the following questions for student reflection:

Respond to the following questions, reflecting on your finished collage:	
What am I happy with?	
What was challenging for me?	
What helped me do my best work?	
What would I do differently next time?	

SUGGESTED DESCRIPTIVE FEEDBACK:

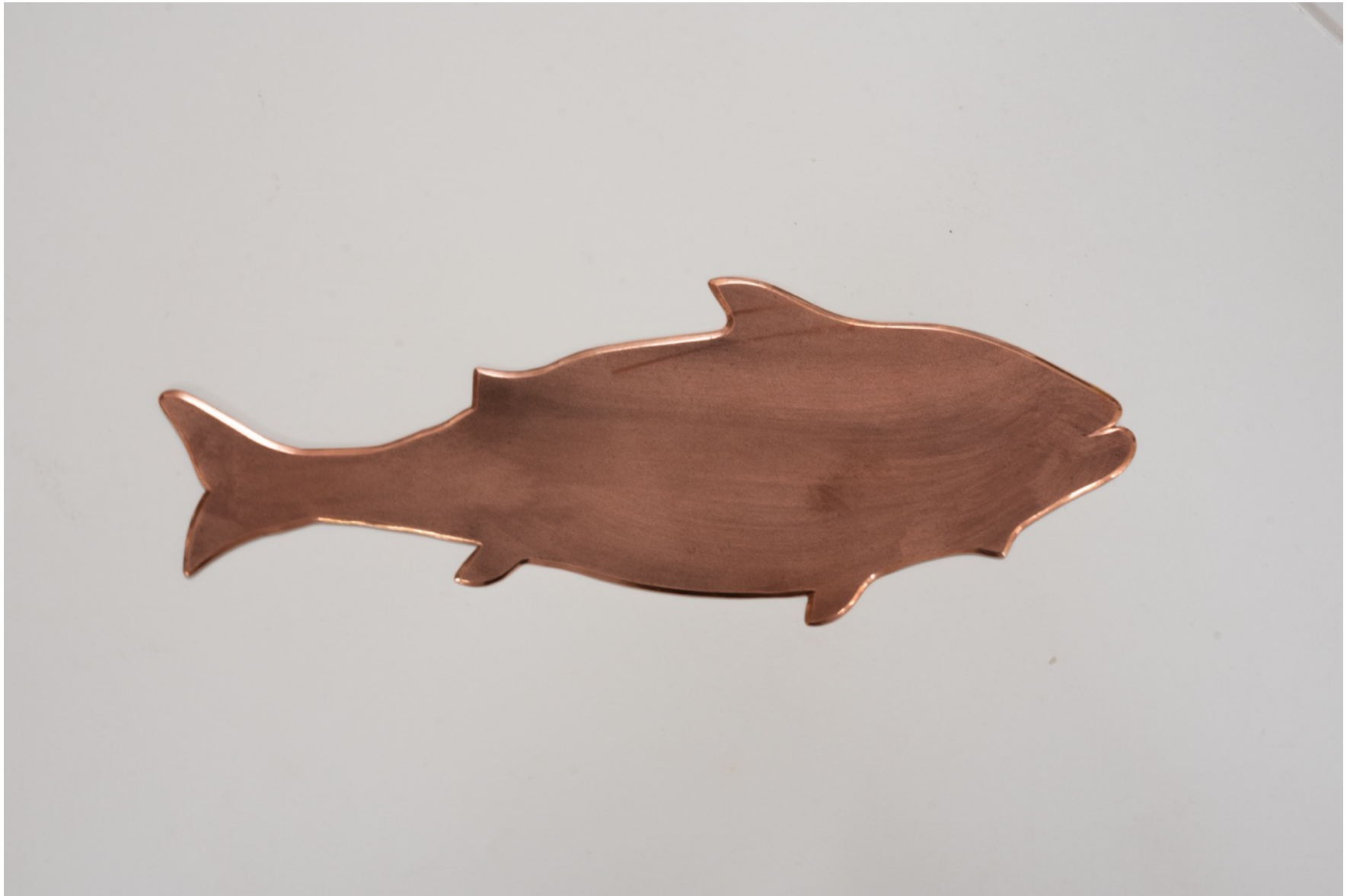
- Nora contributes her ideas and observations about artists' use of processes and techniques and asks thoughtful questions about works of art.
- Nora used processes and tools to create a mixed media collage including representing texture by creating a rubbing, using stencils, and painting with watercolours.
- Nora made thoughtful use of warm and cool colours in designing a composition.



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Printing plate and other materials



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