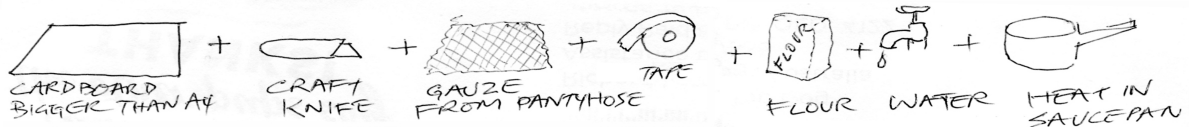


SIMPLE SCREENPRINTING FOR KIDS

Rod Ewins © March 2020

I devised this simple system in the 1970s when a student teacher I was supervising was in a Primary school that had virtually no equipment, just powder poster colours. She wanted to teach the kids screenprinting (which she was doing in her own work with me) but had no budget to buy equipment. So I came up with this, and it worked quite well. The kids loved it.

MATERIALS:



Note: The best printing paper (since the paint is just glue, really) is a porous one like thick newsprint or thick wrapping paper, but anything will do in a pinch. If you use something like computer printing paper it will buckle a bit as it dries.

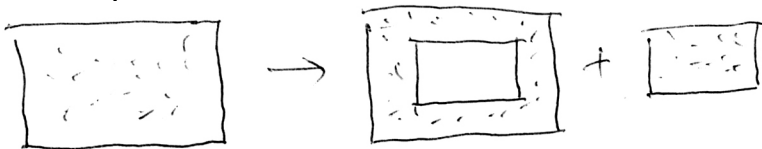
For the printing frame, we used corrugated cardboard once, but strong plain cardboard lasts better. It doesn't have to be A4, but it should be kept on the small side.

If you wish to try making a piece of printed fabric, try using fabric dye in place of (at least some of the) water to make the paste. Mark out the fabric with a pencil to know where to print, print alternate spaces first, then fill in the gaps. Fix according to dye instructions. Should work 😊.

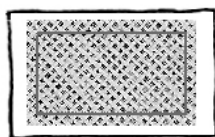
METHOD:

A. Screen frame

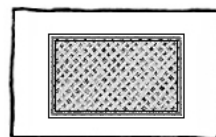
1. Cut a rectangle about A4 size out of centre of cardboard. Retain both pieces.



2. Trim smaller piece — cut about 1 cm off length and width. This will be your squeegee.
3. Cut piece of pantyhose (or muslin, if you have no pantyhose) to make a rectangle of gauze about 4cm longer and 4cm wider than the hole in the large cardboard.
4. Tape the gauze to one side of big cardboard, covering hole and overlapping it by 2cm or so. Tape one end in place first, pull taut and tape other end, then do sides the same way. Masking or packaging tape are best, but Sellotape will do if you only have that.
5. Turn cardboard over, and tape around inside edges of the hole, out onto surface of gauze about 0.5cm.



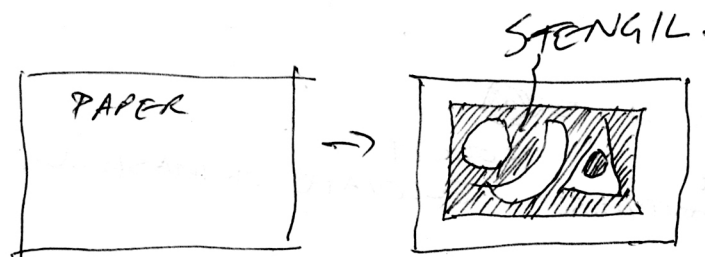
BACK tape around gauze



Front (well) tape to seal in well

B. Stencil

1. Take a piece of paper larger than gauze hole in frame, but smaller than overall frame
2. Draw the first set of shapes you want to print. They can be realistic or just any shapes that come to mind. They should all fit in an area less than the size of the gauze "well"
3. Cut out the shapes, leaving a stencil. If you want, you can have floating "islands" that will not print. For instance, if you had a letter "O", the white inside would be an island.
4. Put the stencil onto your sheet of printing paper, placing any islands carefully.



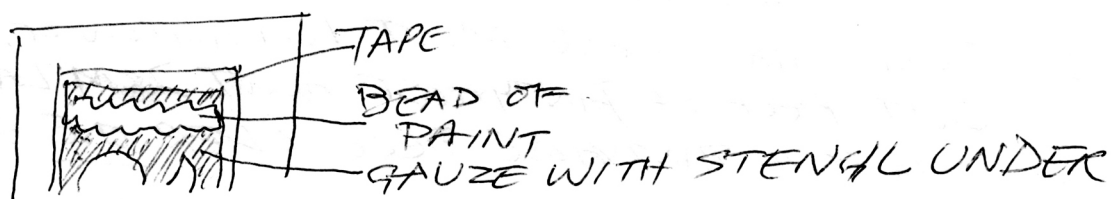
5. Carefully put the screen frame over the stencil, making sure all holes fit within the gauzed window. If the holes go under the tape they will bleed during printing, so put a little "island" over any such places to keep them clear of the taped edge.

C. Making Paint

1. Mix 1 part flour into 5 parts cold water. Warm gently in a saucepan stirring constantly until it goes creamy. Allow to cool a bit before use, should be about the consistency of custard or thick cream. Don't leave it too long before using or it will set hard.
2. Mix in desired poster colour. You can adjust transparency by the ratio of colour to paste. If you are overprinting with several colours, more transparent colours give a pleasing effect.

D. Printing

1. With a spoon, run a bead of paint along one end inside the well.



2. Holding the frame firmly with one hand, take the original cardboard cutout piece, and using it as a squeegee, draw the paint firmly down over the whole length of the well. Leave paint at other end, unless it didn't cover properly, in which case draw it back the other way without moving the frame.
3. Lift frame off printing paper, and you should have a print. Remove it and put it aside to dry. The stencil should be stuck to frame. On a new piece of printing paper, repeat from 1. When this is done, put it aside separately from the first print, to dry. DON'T put them on top of one another or they'll stick together.

E. Cleanup

1. With squeegee, remove all excess paint and discard.
2. Peel off stencil and discard (it can't be re-used as it will curl up as it dries. If you want the same shapes again, use one of the prints and cut out the coloured bits to make a fresh stencil.
3. Using a damp (NOT wet) sponge or cloth, wipe any remaining paint off squeegee and out of well of frame.

F. Next colour

1. Return to **B. Stencil** and repeat whole process with different cutout shapes, and a new colour. If you want good "glazes" of colour, use a fairly transparent second colour. If you want to overprint the first colours, for instance with words on a poster, make the second colour pretty dense with pigment.



HOPE YOU HAVE FUN!