Artful Isolation Activities

Week Eight: Sidewalk Stencil Art

Create a stencil to share with your community through a unique piece of street art!

What is Stencil Art? Stencilling is a technique to create easily reproducible images by transferring paint onto a surface through shapes cut in cardboard, or other materials.

Why Sidewalk Stencil Art? During isolation, our Northern Artistic Director, Judy McNaughton, and her family have enjoyed looking at children's sidewalk chalk drawings on walks in their neighbourhood. Her son, Xavier, also enjoys drawing with chalks, but loses interest when he can't achieve the detail and effects he desires. Having admired the style of fabulous public stencil artists such as Banksy, Judy and Xavier sought to get a similar visual effect with sidewalk chalk. In her own words, "with some research and experimenting, we found an effective painting method for stencils using chalk. Being an avid Star Wars fan, Xavier chose an image of General Grievous to make into a stencil. It's been gratifying to spend time painting together in the sunshine and seeing his Grievous paintings distributed through the neighbourhood."

Suitable For: Ages 6+ (younger children will need help with planning and cutting the stencil).

What You'll Need: Cardboard, box cutter knife, packing tape, masking tape, paint brush, chalk, cheese grater, corn starch, student acrylic or tempera paint, sponge, and a sweeping brush.

Getting Ready:
- Look at websites featuring stencil art, such as: <u>Banksy</u>, <u>April Doepker</u>, and <u>Spray Planet</u> .
- Consider the kind of image you'd like to make into a stencil. You can use a found image or a personal drawing. The stencil you create can be highly complex or as simple as a leaf shape.
- Gather the materials, starting with thin cardboard for the stencil. Cardboard or coverstock paper with a shiny side, such as a lego box or mayfair paper, would be ideal.
- Prepare your painting mixture. We recommend: ⅓ cup of chalk powder shaved on a cheese grater, a tbsp of liquid acrylic or tempera paint and a tbsp of cornstarch. Add water to achieve the consistency of thick cream. You can also simply add water to chalk powder, or mix equal parts water and cornstarch then add food colour. (Note: You may want a mask while grating the chalk powder.)

Activity:
- After you paste or draw your image onto cardboard, plan the design and bridges for the stencil. The painted image is created through shapes in the stencil that are cut out of the cardboard for the paint to go through. Isolated areas of cardboard in the design require small cardboard strips to hold the islands from falling out of the stencil. Like the middle of an "O":
- These connecting lines of cardboard can be worked into the design as shadows or defining lines. I like to colour in the bridges and islands of cardboard to help identify when cutting.
- Cover the cardboard with clear packing tape for durability, on front and back.
- On a cutting pad or large piece of cardboard, cut out the areas of the stencil that the paint will go through, repairing accidental slices with packing tape.
- Brush off a smooth area of sidewalk and tape the stencil down on all four sides.
- Holding your brush vertical, paint with a stabbing motion along the cardboard edges and bridges, to avoid paint getting under the cardboard. Peel the stencil up to reveal your artwork!

Reflection:
- While looking at the work of stencil artists online, what pulled you in? How did the artists portray their worldviews through their stencil work? What passions would you like to share with others?
- If you painted the stencil art in a public space, how did it change the meaning of the image? Does location impact the way your image is received?
- After seeing your completed stencil art, how would you like to alter the painting? Try changing the paint colours, draw into and around the painting with chalk, repeat the image. How does this change the effect?
- Share photos of your postcards with us via Facebook or Instagram, tagging @**skcommonweal** and using the hashtags #**cwstencil** and #**cwneighbours**.

*Image sourced from <u>https://www.sprayplanet.com/blogs/news/creating-stencil-art-a-background-and-brief-tutorial</u>