

Artists For Kids

CHARCOAL STENCIL PRINTS

Inspired by the Artist-in-Residence workshop
with Sara-Jeanne Bourget

Grade 8 - 12 Visual Arts

ACTIVITY

Inspired by Sara-Jeanne Bourget's hybrid drawing and printmaking imagery students will use drawing to reveal the often overlooked or unseen details of our immediate environment. Moving from observation to imagination, drawing becomes a tool to discover new perspectives. Students will create works that engage with and respond to their natural surroundings. This is an invitation to explore the expanded possibilities of drawing, with a particular focus on working with charcoal.

Students will learn and apply value, texture, and space to their artworks.



BIG IDEA

The visual arts use a unique sensory language for creating and communicating.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Vine charcoal
- ☐ Compressed charcoal sticks (various softness and hardness)
- ☐ Compressed charcoal pencils + sharpener
- ☐ Fixative
- ☐ Erasers: kneaded eraser, vinyl eraser, fine pencil eraser
- ☐ Colour pencils
- ☐ Brushes for charcoal and blending stumps (various sizes)
- ☐ Drawing/Mixed media 90lb or higher paper 9x12 & 11x15
- ☐ Vellum paper for stencil 11x15
- ☐ Tracing paper (roll or pad)
- ☐ x-acto knives + cutting mat + rulers + scissors



FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).





CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

EXPLORE AND CREATE

- Create both collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, and purposeful play
- Explore materials, technologies, processes, and environments by combining and arranging elements, principles, and image design strategies
- Explore relationships between identity, place, culture, society, and belonging through artistic experiences

REASON AND REFLECT

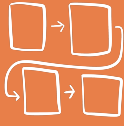
- Describe, interpret, and evaluate how artists use technologies, processes, materials, and environments to create and communicate ideas
- Develop, refine, document, and critically appraise ideas, processes, and technical skills

COMMUNICATE AND DOCUMENT

- Revise, refine, analyze, and document creative works and experiences

CONNECT AND EXPAND

- Take creative risks to experience and express thoughts, emotions, and meaning



LESSON SEQUENCE

6-8 classes



Sara-Jeanne Bourget, *Rock Paper Charcoal*, Charcoal on Paper, 108"x96", 2019



Sara-Jeanne Bourget, *Charcoal Study*, Charcoal on Stonehenge, 15"x15", 2021

INTRODUCE THE WORK OF SARA-JEANNE BOURGET

Activity: Working at table or small groups while teacher projects artworks, discuss the following questions:

View [Rock Paper Charcoal](#):

- How many different values do you see?
- Where do you see texture and how would you describe the texture?
- Where has positive and negative space been used in this composition?

View [Charcoal Study](#):

- Sara-Jeanne Bourget uses charcoal, what is charcoal made from?
- Discuss/share that Sara-Jeanne makes her own charcoal & then these Archive drawings using that charcoal.

*optional class activity to forage for charcoal in nearby forest

SARA-JEANNE BOURGET BIO

Artist Sara-Jeanne Bourget’s drawing and printmaking practice engages with cyclical processes that echo natural rhythms and phenomena. Through this work, the artist explores how the act of “mining”—traditionally associated with extraction and destruction—can be re-imagined as a method of uncovering ideas, relationships, and possibilities.

Observing how non-human individuals mine their environment offers new perspectives to foster relationships with the world. A fascination with surfaces altered by animal/plant/human/time-based erosion creates space for new forms and future possibilities.

In Bourget’s practice, materials and methods intrinsic to drawing and printmaking intertwine, creating hybrid images that blur the boundaries of both disciplines. The artist often works by “mining” from old or discarded charcoal drawings, using them as the foundation for new matrices. These are built through layering, covering, and excavating marks—actions that mirror natural and emotional cycles. Repeated patterns and forms appear seasonally, evolving through intuitive gestures and sustained repetition.

Bourget is currently an assistant professor in Drawing at Emily Carr University.

INTRO TO CHARCOAL: OBSERVATIONAL DRAWINGS

Activity: Students create a detailed still life drawing using charcoal, observing small nature objects that they collect or that are provided by the teacher.

Invite students to focus on creating **value and texture** and to create a composition with attention to **positive and negative space**.



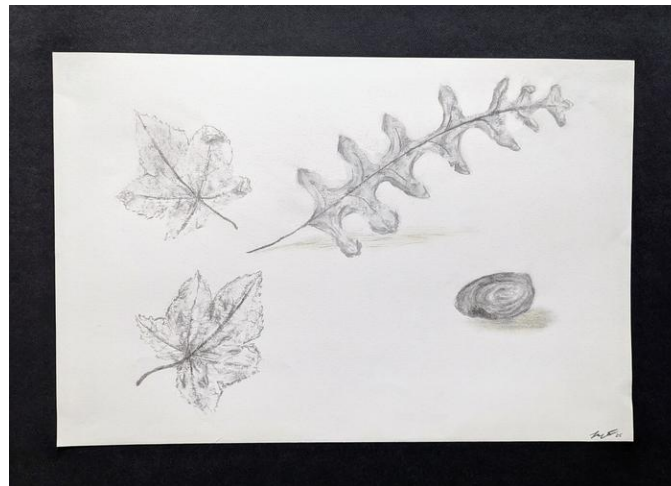
Observational Drawing Materials & Techniques:

- Types of charcoal: vine, compressed, pencils
- Soft pastel (black and colour)
- Blending tools: brushes & blending stumps
- Erasers: kneaded & vinyl for mark making; use both as a drawing tool & to erase
- Create value using different types of charcoal: layering vine with compressed on top
- Observation techniques: hand eye coordination, gesture, contour line

Charcoal drawing inspiration:

<https://www.sarajeannebourget.com/archiving-my-charcoal>

<https://www.sarajeannebourget.com/dust-standing-over-its-eventual-sediments>



CHARCOAL RUBBINGS AND STENCIL PRINTS

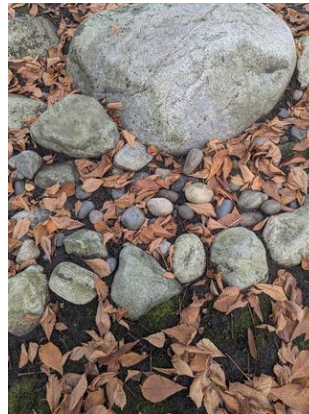
Activity #1: Share with students Sara-Jeanne Bourget's artwork [*Down to the Ground*](#), the inspiration for this project.



Sara-Jeanne Bourget, *Down to the Ground*, Charcoal and pastel monotype, Stone lithography on Stonehenge, 11"x15", 2023

Activity #2: Take photos of patterns outdoors.

Bring students outdoors and invite them to find **patterns and textures** such as spiderwebs, water droplets, details of a leaf, branches, cracks in the ground, or pavement, etc. Print student photos in black and white on 8.5"x11" copy paper. Alternately the teacher can provide a selection of printed photos.

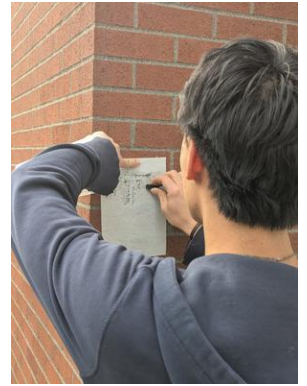


Examples of patterns and textures found in nature

Activity #3: Make texture rubbings.

As a class, go outside and invite students to capture 2-3 different found textures on 6"x9" tracing paper using compressed charcoal and/or pastel (black or colour).

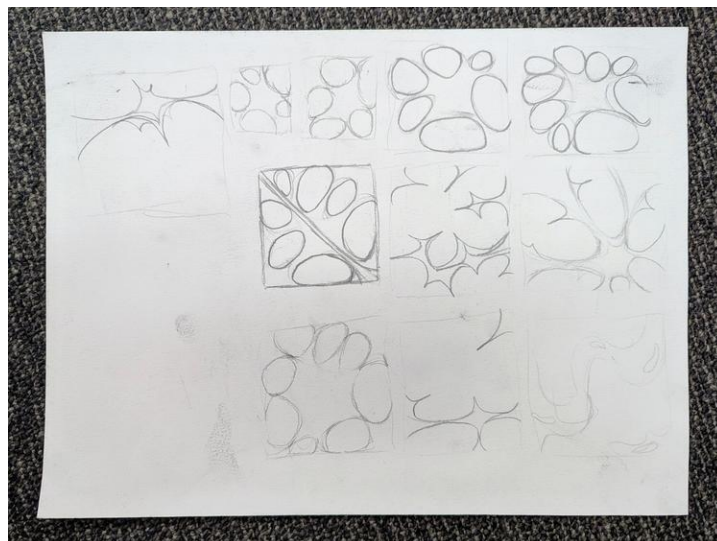
Examples of textures include tree bark, cement, rocks, etc. Alternately, plastic texture plates can be used to make rubbings in the classroom.



Students creating rubbings on tracing paper outdoors

Activity #4: Planning for stencil design.

In a sketchbook or on scrap paper, invite students to explore ideas for creating an abstracted composition for their stencil design. Taking inspiration from the photographs taken in Activity #1, they will draw shapes and patterns. The pattern that they create should be contained within a rectangle or square shape. See example of planning and image development, below.

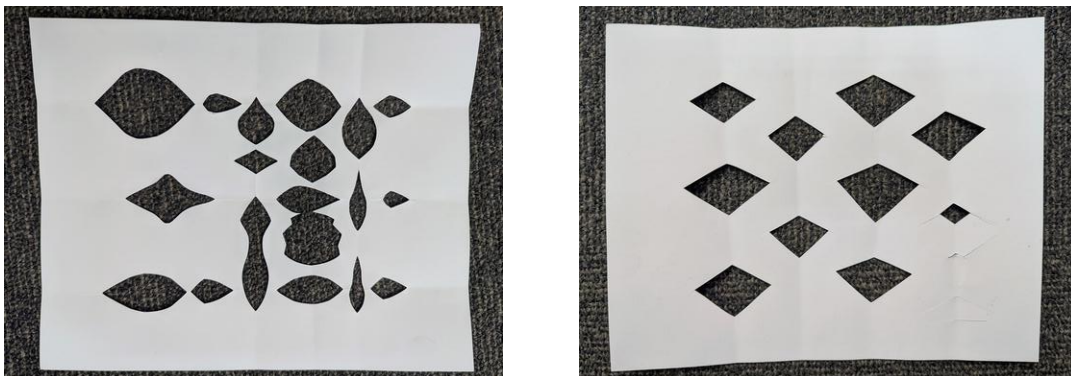


Activity #4: Create stencil.

Give each student 1 sheet of 11"x15" vellum paper. Students will draw their stencil design on this paper and cut the design out using an x-acto blade and cutting mat. The stencil can consist of one design or multiple designs. See examples below.



As an adaptation for students who cannot use an x-acto blade, paper can be folded into sections and shapes cut out with scissors (like a paper snowflake process). Students should keep a frame of paper around their cut-out shapes (do not cut through the edge of the paper). See examples below.



Activity #5: Create charcoal transfer print.

Place the stencil on top of a sheet of 11"x15" 90lb paper, using tape to hold the stencil in place. Place the texture rubbings from Activity #3 face down on top of the stencil, covering the cut-out sections of the stencil. Transfer the texture rubbings onto the 11"x15"

90lb paper by rubbing on the back of the paper with hands, a wooden spoon, or a printmaking baren.

Remove the rubbings and the stencil to reveal the charcoal stencil print!



Activity #6: Draw imaginary or realistic critters.

Refer back to Sara-Jeanne Bourget's artwork *Down to the Ground* and point out the ants included in her designs.

Invite students to draw imaginary or realistic critters in their charcoal transfer prints using coloured pencils. See examples, below.



APPLYING FIXATIVE AND DISPLAYING ARTWORK



- Charcoal and pastel will smudge when touched and a fixative is needed.
- Use aerosol fixatives with proper safety precautions (outdoors or with ventilation system), or substitute with unscented hairspray.
- The finished artwork will need 2-3 light coats of fixative with time to dry as it continues to off-gas.

