

LIU Siu-jane

Suggested class activities for Senior Primary

Artist: LIU Siu-jane

Level: Senior Primary

Theme: Good Luck Symbolised by Fish

Suggested length: 3 hours

Teaching concept:

Printmaking is an art form that can be extensively reproduced; with planography, a form of printmaking that the artist feels best incorporates the beauty of painting into printing.

LIU Siu-jane loves using planography as her art medium, interpreting traditional Chinese art through the techniques of Western printmaking. She believes planography is a perfect combination of sensitive painting and rational production, reproducing her ink strokes and tones from the plate to the print. This art form allows her to directly create the effects of Chinese ink and wash paintings on a stone or aluminium plate with diluted paints.

This course aims to introduce planography, a rare art medium, to students through the study of LIU's works, and understand how the artist integrates Chinese and Western culture.

Required background knowledge:

1. The students should be familiar with the outer characteristics of goldfish.
2. They should be able to draw various forms of goldfish.
3. They should have learned how to apply colours with watercolour paint.
4. They should have learned the principle of mutual repulsion between oil and water.

Teaching goals:

1. Learn about and appreciate LIU's prints works through her video.
2. Learn about printmaking as an art form that can be extensively reproduced.
3. Learn about the printmaking process of planography.
4. Learn about the printmaking process using polyester plates.

Preparation before class: Students should collect pictures of goldfish.

Suggested class activities:

1. **Introduce LIU Siu-jane and her artistic style. (Suggested length: 5 mins)**
Show the **“Artist Introduction ppt” pp1-3**

Born in Macau in 1952, LIU Siu-jane obtained a B.A. (Hons.) degree in Fine Arts from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1976. In 1979, she earned the Sir Robert Black Trust Fund Postgraduate Scholarship to study painting and printmaking at St. Martin's School of Art, London, and went on to study at the University of Illinois in Chicago, obtaining her Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking. LIU received the Urban Council Fine Arts Award – Printmaking (1985) and the Lu Xun Prints Prize (1999), etc. She was also awarded the Hong Kong Arts Development Council Award for Arts Development in 2000.

LIU specialises in lithography, and her artworks demonstrate touches inspired by the traditional brushwork of ink wash painting, successfully incorporating Chinese art spirit into her works.

2. Introduction to prints (Suggested length: 10 mins)

Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp1-6**

Suggested Q&A:

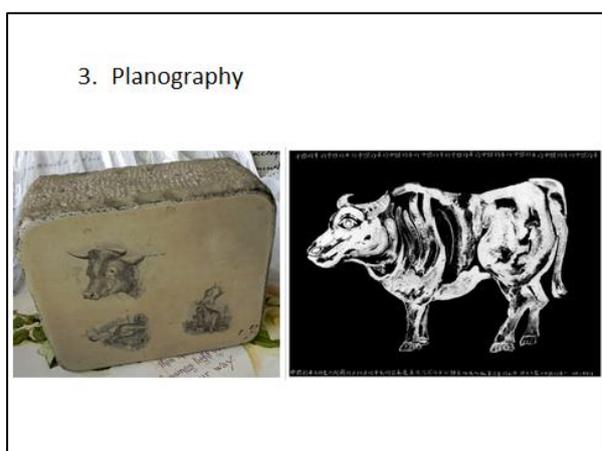
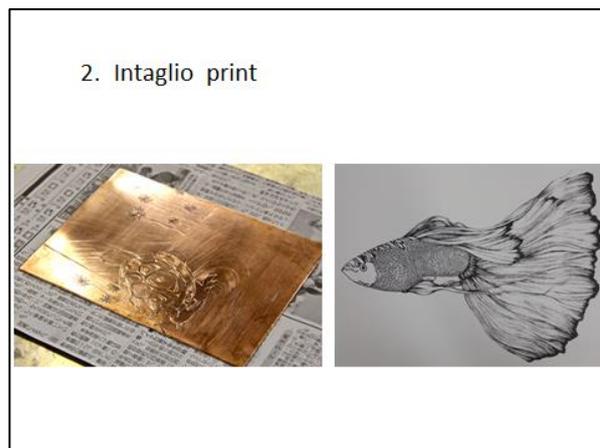
- What is a print?

(A print is a work of art created by carving on blocks and making copies of the original image.)



- Have you ever tried printmaking?
(Students might have tried potato printing, linocuts, woodblock printing, etc.)
- Do you know of any kinds of traditional prints?
Relief print: woodblock print or linocut print;
Intaglio print: etching on metal surfaces;
Planography: lithography or processed etching on metal surfaces (e.g., LIU's artworks);
Screen print: silk screen print.
- The teacher may then explain that printmaking techniques have evolved with technological advances. Advances in photography and computer art have changed the concept of painting,

and the definition of prints has widened as well. Nowadays, prints can be made by computers.



3. **Play the “Artist Video mp4” (Suggested length: 20 mins)**

Through the Artist Video, the students can:

- Learn about the printmaking process of planography;
- Learn that planography is based on the principle of the mutual repulsion of water and oil; and
- Learn about LIU’s creative process, and the meanings, emotions and philosophy expressed in her works.

4. **Appreciation of LIU’s works (Suggested length: 10 mins)**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp5-10

Image source: Hong Kong Original Print

http://www.originalprint-hk.com/artists/Ljane/Ljane_01.html

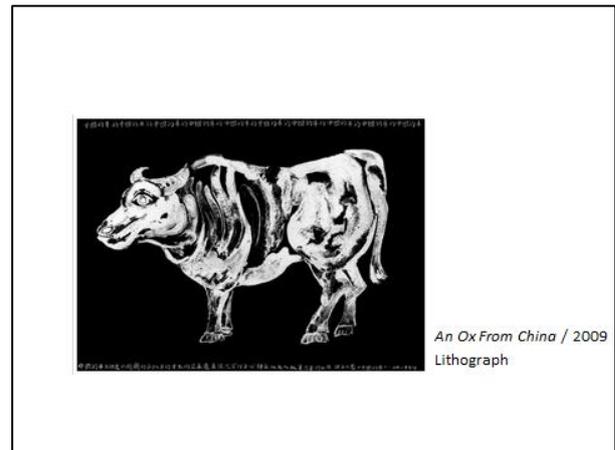
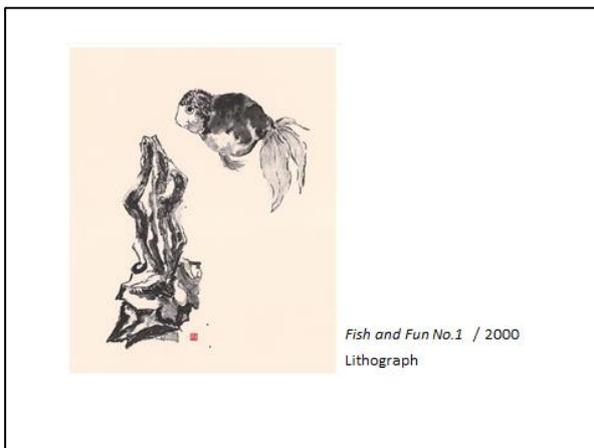
Guide the students to appreciate in the following steps:

- Description: What do you see in the painting?

- Explanation: What do you suppose it means?



Dancing in Water Series: The theme is inspired by the ever-changing movements of jellyfish. The process of creation explores the artist's unlimited imagination and enjoyment of aesthetic imagery.



Through a series of traditional Chinese symbols, including goldfish, lotus and ox, the artist illustrates her view towards life.



Use the traditional Chinese symbol of a tiger to represent courage, luck and power.

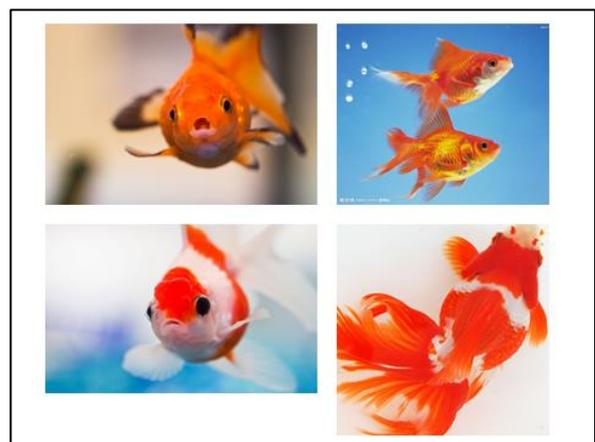
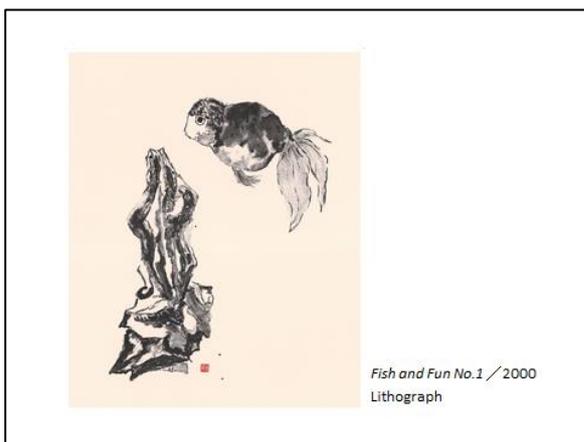


Longing for Home Series: Through illustrating the high and dry situation of the Polar animals, these works reflect the severely threatened situation of the Earth and raise the eagerness of reviving nature.

5. **Learn about the theme and printmaking process using polyester plate (Suggested length: 15 mins)**

Show the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp5-10**

- Introduce LIU’s artwork *Fish and Fun No.1*, and explain the symbolic meanings of goldfish in Chinese culture:
 - Their movements seem stable and effortless, and their swimming posture is elegant, so people also call them “water peonies” or “golden-scaled fairies”.
 - Goldfish are always swimming, and they add liveliness to a family. The word “gold” denotes money, and the pronunciation of the word “fish” is similar to that of the word “extra”. Therefore, goldfish symbolise liveliness and wealth.



Symbolic Meanings of Goldfish in Chinese Culture



People also call them “water peonies” or “golden-scaled fairies”.

Word Meanings of Goldfish in Chinese Culture

“gold”



“money”

“fish”



“extra”

- Students share their goldfish pictures.

Play again the “Artist Video mp4” from 11:12 or show the “Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp14-18

- Explain to the students that in this activity, they will try a new and simple kind of printmaking material, polyester plate.
- Introduce the art-making process.
- If the print is not clear, it may be because of: the photocopy did not have enough carbon; the black-and-white contrast of the image was not distinct enough; the printmaking paper was too dry or wet; not enough pressure was applied with the printmaking machine or baren; or not enough printmaking ink was used.
- A polyester plate can be used to make only about five prints, so the student should be careful when making a print each time.



1. Observe the images of goldfish and draw goldfish on A4 draft paper
2. Apply colour with watercolour paint and create a gradient of colour density



3. Make a photocopy of the draft on an polyester plate (A4-size)
4. Use oil-based pens to draw objects such as seagrass or stones to enrich the image on the polyester plate



5. Apply water with a wet sponge
6. The area with carbon and oil-based ink will not absorb water, while the other area will



7. Apply a proper amount of water-based printmaking ink on a flat plastic plate. Spread the ink with an ink roller so that a thin layer of ink is evenly applied
8. Apply printmaking ink to the polyester plate with the ink roller. The area with carbon and oil-based ink from the maker will absorb the printmaking ink.
9. Spray water to wet the printmaking paper, which should be larger than A4.



10. Making a print with a printmaking machine: Adjust the pressure of the printmaking machine. Place the polyester plate onto the machine and cover it with the moist printmaking paper. Then place a thick piece of cardboard and an etching blanket on top and make the print.
11. Making a print with a baren: Place the printmaking paper onto the polyester plate. Use a baren to rub the paper with even pressure.

6. **Class activity (Suggested length: 115 mins)**

- Have the students to create a planography on the theme of goldfish

7. **Appreciation of the students' works (Suggested length: 15 mins)**

- Share their experience in making planography and appreciate each other's work.

8. **Materials**

Polyester plate, poster or water-colour, pencil, drafting paper, marker, colour mixing tray, photocopier, printmaking ink, ink roller, printmaking paper, printmaking machine, baren