The Poetic Print in High School Art Classrooms

Objective: The Poetic Print engages high school learners to explore text as art through printmaking and critical thinking skills.

Unit #1 Elegant Problem: Using poetry and screen printing techniques, develop a personal mantra and design or choose a typeface that artistically reinforces the meaning behind the text.

1. Students research and create posters about poets from the Beat Generation.
2. Students complete writing prompts in a poetry journal, culminating in a stream of consciousness writing about who they want to be.
3. Students design a mantra using knowledge of typography.
4. Students collaborate in pairs to expose screens and print their background layers.
5. Students collaborate in pairs to print their text layers and create an edition.
6. Students critique and assess their final work.

Unit #2 Elegant Problem: Combining techniques in typography and printmaking, create a 2-layer linoleum block print that expresses a personal mantra, or words to live by.

1. Students define mantras and use found text from magazines to develop a poetic use of language. Students write poems about who they want to be.
2. Students use Photoshop to design their mantra and practice their typography skills.
3. Students print background layers and learn about the linoleum block printing process.
4. Students transfer and carve their text layer.
5. Students mix colors, layer, and print their text layer to create a 2-layer block print edition.
6. Students critique and assess their final work.

Unit #3 Elegant Problem: Using graffiti hand-lettering and block printing techniques, create a personal mantra that affirms something you believe in.

1. Students practice hand lettering by redesigning the letters of the alphabet.
2. Students learn about graffiti hand lettering in order to design their own name.
3. Students create a mantra based on free writes and routine writing.
4. Students learn block printing techniques by creating test plates and practice the printing process.
5. Students design their mantra in hand-lettering or graffiti style letters, transfer it to a linoleum plate, and print it.
6. Students collaborate with the school’s graffiti club to recreate their mantras in the school’s courtyard.

Examples of Student Work