

RECOVERY ART

Being In Touch: Moving Outside

A creative and social workshop



Hello Recovery Art Members!

Welcome to May's Recovery Art session.

We hope you are all well and that these sessions are helping to support yourself, your wellbeing and creativity. These workshops are a way to create together, share ideas and feel connected to The Barber Institute.

This month's theme as part of our Being in Touch series is: Moving Outside.

This May's workshop is supported by our Recovery Art zoom session on Monday 26th May. Please use this resource and our recording of the workshop in your own time and space if you prefer.

This month we are continuing our theme of Touch. In April we explored Favourite Spaces and how we can use these spaces and objects in our homes to inspire mark making on large paper. We really enjoyed working with you all in this way and wondered if you have been mark making or drawing with the materials?

This Touch workshop will help us to use all our senses to investigate outside spaces and textures and how these can be translated into collagraph work.

Let's go outside

As we start to reconnect with outside environments and start to explore our wider world, we might start to notice how these spaces feel or have changed. Our senses may take over and we might become more aware of sounds, smells, textures and temperatures. Are we revisiting familiar and personal outside spaces like a garden, local park, canal or local walk? Or are we exploring new places? We may be viewing the outside spaces from a door step or window, these experiences are all extremely valuable and help us to feel closer to outside environments and nature. Studies have shown that if we spend time with nature and even just look at images of nature that this helps our mood and well being.

You could use this time now to visualise your favourite outside spaces. You may want to find a quiet space inside or outside and close your eyes and take a moment to imagine your favourite outside place.





Outside Textures and Spaces

Imagine you are standing or sitting in that space.

What can you see around you? What does the landscape look like?

What can you hear? moving water? birds singing? leaves rustling?

What is the temperature like? Can you imagine the weather? Maybe you can feel the sun on your face? or delicate raindrops?

What can you smell? freshly cut grass, the beach or your favourite flowers?

Imagine running your hands over the ground, grass, concrete, sand or tree bark?

Now take a moment to think about how those textures feel?

You might want to take a moment to come back to the present and try to bring with you all the lovely, amazing thoughts from your outside experience to the workshop today.

Viewfinders

When looking for textures and patterns outside it's useful to make a viewfinder from a cardboard lid, this could be a large or small scale viewfinder.

If you can take the viewfinder out on a walk, into your garden or onto your doorstep you could then start to focus on your favourite textures and patterns. If you are not able to go outside you can use the viewfinder in your home to find interesting textures, use a window frame, or you can work from the images in this PDF. Maybe consider how you can link inside and outside surfaces.

Hover the viewfinder over your favourite spots, look down at the ground, high up at trees and buildings until you find an interesting image. You can photograph these textures and patterns to help to inspire this month's workshop or draw them into a sketchbook. Viewfinders are great at helping us to focus on one area and block out any distractions.





Use your hands to feel the textures you can see and think about how they feel:

Soft or rough?

Dry or damp?

Warm or cold?

We might record what we experience with sketches, photographs, videos, or by collecting objects from the landscape, such as leaves, grasses, sticks, bark or petals before we start our collagraph activity.

When looking at our outside spaces we have been thinking of positive words to describe these:

NATURE

GROWTH

CALMING

BREEZE

ORGANIC

BEAUTY

SCENT

Suggested Materials:

Grey board
Textured materials
Match sticks
Glue sticks
Paper

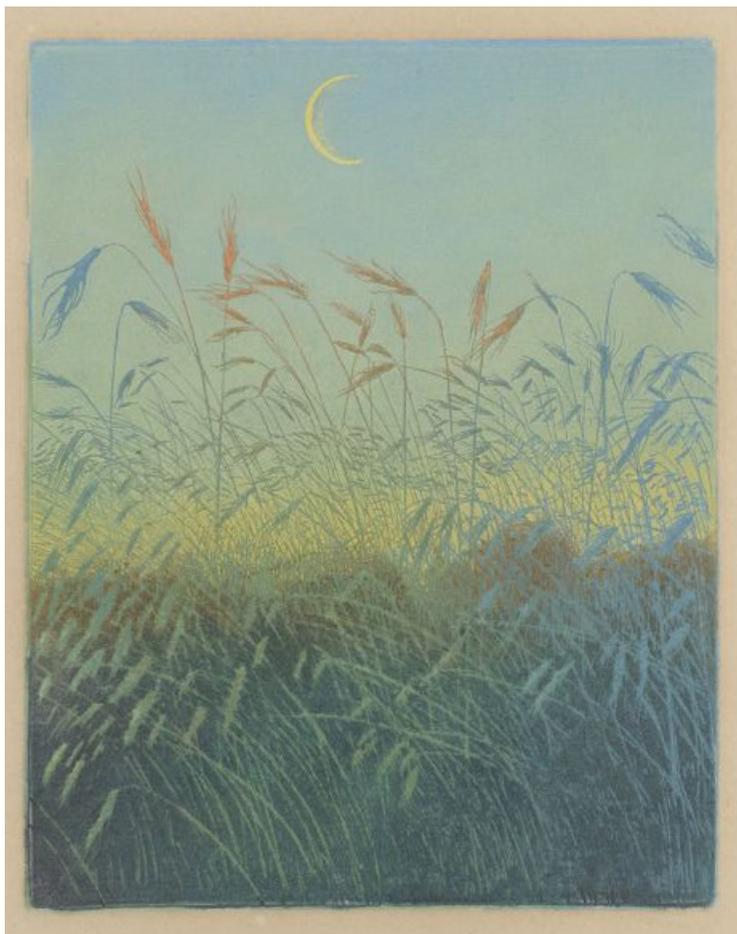
Optional Materials at Home:

Masking tape
Foil

Charcoal/drawing materials

Take a moment to get comfortable and make a tea.
Gather our art materials, thoughts and a biscuit or 2...





Arthur Illies, *Ripe Cornfield: Evening*, 1896.
© The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham.

This month's piece of work from the Barber's collection is an etching by Arthur Illies. Kept in the prints and drawings room at The Barber Institute, *Ripe Cornfield: Evening* (Ahrenfeld am Abend) was created in Hamburg, 1896. This beautiful etching on zinc is 18.5 x 14.5 cm, printed onto wove paper.

This extraordinary colour etching is the product of deep biting a zinc plate and of one printing only. The colours are applied "à la poupée" (The term à la poupée means "with the doll" in French, the "doll" being the wad of cloth, shaped like a ball). Illies, a Hamburg artist, became frustrated by printing in colour with more than one plate and developed his own technique of deep etching in order to isolate colour fields. His work was catalogued by a lawyer called Gustav Schiefler who would later catalogue the works of Nolde, Kirchner and Munch.

This beautifully printed piece is so gentle and glowing. It creates movement and atmosphere and really takes us to this place where we can imagine the warm breeze. It also feels like an illustration for a book cover or poster. The woven paper really adds texture and comfort to the print.

When I look at it, it gives me instant calm, a bit like listening to some relaxing, therapeutic music. I feel the sway of the corn and the warmth of the evening sunset.

Do you like the way Illies has applied colour?
Does it remind you of an outside space?

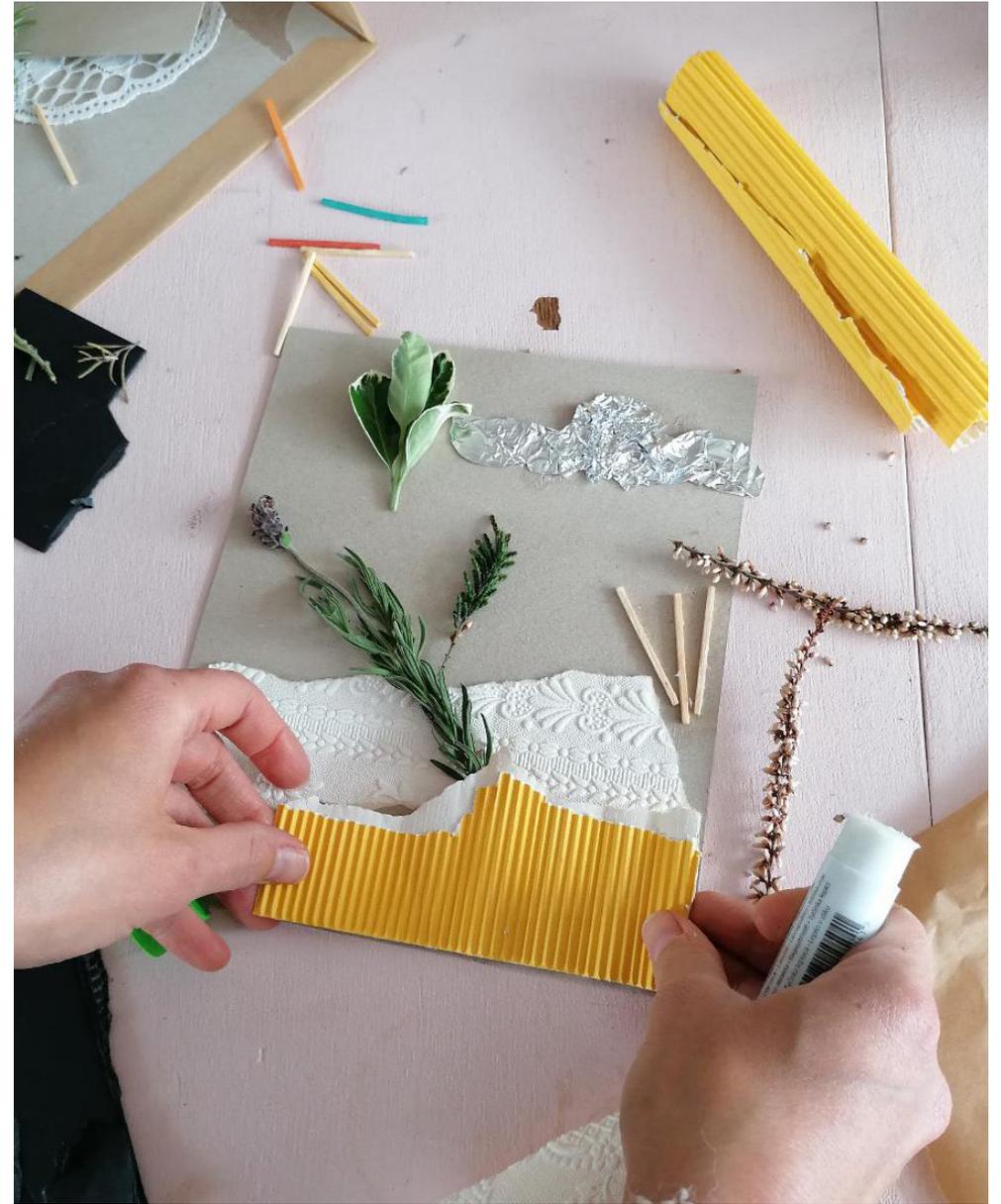
Create a collagraph plate

Let's start our first activity, creating a collagraph plate.

First collect up all of your textured materials and any natural materials you have, then start to select and arrange these on top of the grey board. You can manipulate the materials, play around with the composition and start to think about creating a relief. Do you want to create a scene, a place or an abstract pattern. Go with your instincts and how the materials behave on the board.

Once happy with your collagraph plate, use the glue stick to attach to the grey board. To secure some of the larger textures, it might be useful to have some tape handy.







Take Rubbings from the Collagraph plate

Let's investigate how we can take rubbings from the collagraph plate with a range of papers, graphite, oil pastel and charcoal.

Hold the paper really still over the plate (you may want to stick down with masking tape).

Take your graphite and start to gently rub over the paper, use the side of the graphite for a more smooth coverage.

You will feel and notice the textures underneath and this can help to know when to add more pressure.

Be experimental, you can take lots of rubbings from the plate. Now try the oil pastels and charcoal.



Embossing

Now we can use the large piece of foil to emboss over the top of the collagraph plate. Place the foil over the plate and start to gently rub over the surface. You can add more pressure as you go, but try to gain an embossed effect onto the foil. The shapes and textures should start to show through as you rub the area. You can also try this with tissue parchment paper.





Experimenting with shape, pattern and texture

If you would like to experiment with alternative patterns and compositions, it's a good idea to try and make some small collagraph plates.

You can use more grey board as the background and it can also be used to cut up into smaller shapes to place onto the plate. I cut small random shapes and pieced them together to create an abstract design. I also used some of the left over textured materials and placed them in simple blocks.

I then made rubbings using different weights and colours of paper with oil pastels, graphite and charcoal. I layered two oil pastels so that it added some contrasting colour. I really enjoyed making these smaller pieces and found it a great way to experiment on a smaller scale.

Evaluation

Let's lay out our prints and plates, you can group together prints from the same plate to see how they differ. This can help us to evaluate which materials and papers we prefer. You may want to photograph these works together or put them up at home. We could cut and collage with these rubbings and embossed work. Maybe we could consider the positive and negative spaces created from the collagraph work.

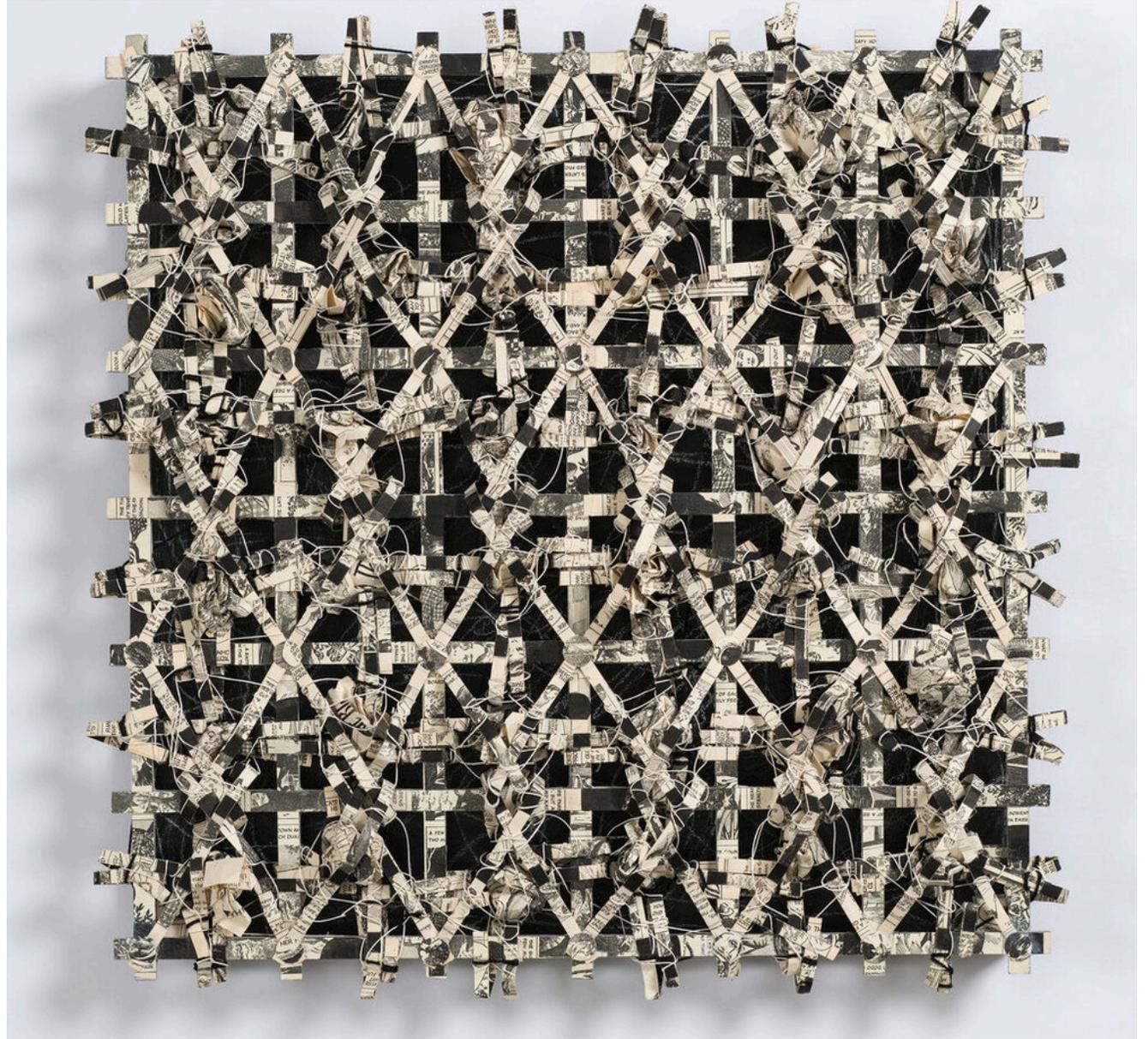
I really like how the collagraph plates work and find I sometimes prefer the plate whether it be lino, polystyrene or collagraph to the printed rubbings. I think I am more drawn to the textures and colours. Which do you prefer? Do you have a favourite rubbing?



Artist Research:

Here are some suggestions of Artists who use mark-making in their work:

Micheal Brennand Wood



Artist Research:

Here are some suggestions of Artists who use mark-making in their work:



Joan Eardley





Thank you for taking part in this Recovery Art workshop.

Thank you for taking part in this Recovery Art online session, we hope you have enjoyed creating collagraphs with us at The Barber, and would love it if you could join us again next month.

Our monthly zoom workshop is Monday 24th May, 11am. The link and recorded video will be sent this coming week.

learning@barber.org.uk

We will be continuing with online sessions through Summer 2021.