

Art Activity #3

Print your own pattern inspired by John Wolseley
and Stewart Russell



Installation image, Stewart Russell, Spacecraft Studio, Melbourne, screenprinted wallpaper on calico, 2019, after John Wolseley A Banyan Tree - Gerard's 'Great Herbal' [1597] linocut. Copyright Stewart Russell, Spacecraft Studio and John Wolseley.

Recommended
for ages 6 and up

Key Idea

This activity is inspired by a wallpaper created by artists Stewart Russell and John Wolseley for the exhibition *The Unquiet Landscape*. This collaboration brings together ideas from John Wolseley and Stewart Russell to make a temporary print that is attached directly onto the gallery wall using starch paste! Linoprints by Noel Counihan were hung on top of the wallpaper.

John Wolseley is inspired by experiences and observations of the natural world. He sees himself as a hybrid mix of artist and scientist, and for this project he has chosen to work with a found botanical illustration of a Banyan tree. The original artwork comes from a Renaissance book of botanical science by John Gerard who was a contemporary of William Shakespeare. *Gerards Herbal History of Plants* was first published in England over 400 years ago.

Banyan trees grow in many parts of the world including Australia, India and South America. During the 1600s they symbolised colonial explorations of the new world.

John Wolseley experienced Banyan trees first-hand a few years ago when he was travelling in Yolngu Country in Arnhem Land with fellow artist Mulkun Wirrpanda. He observed that Banyan trees are not planted in the ground but begin in the branches and crevices of other trees where they are deposited by birds who have eaten the seeds. They grow by sending down a cascade of aerial roots that eventually become tethered to the ground. During his travels Wolseley came to understand Banyan trees to be sacred.

Once Wolseley had chosen his imagery, artist and printmaker, Stewart Russell from Spacecraft Studio worked with him to create a wallpaper pattern incorporating multiple images of the banyan tree via a photographic screen-printing process.

Have a go at printing your own pattern like John Wolseley and Stewart Russell.

YOU WILL NEED:

- 1-2 hours
- Some large potatoes
- Some cookie cutters of different shapes and designs
- A small knife (ask an adult for help using the knife)
- Paintbrush and water pot
- Acrylic paints in colours of your choice and a palette or plate
- A smock
- Paper towel
- Some sheets of paper
- Some butchers paper to protect the table you are working at

Process

1. Set up a temporary printmaking studio at your kitchen bench or table. Protect the surface of your work area with some butchers paper
2. Ask an adult to cut a potato in half. (Option: If you are a beginner and would like to try stamping with a simple round stamp go straight to step 5, but if you would like to try making a more complex stamp go to step 3)
3. Choose a cookie cutter with a shape that you like and firmly push it down about 1 cm into the cut half of the potato.
4. Ask an adult to take a small knife and trace all the way around the edges of the cookie cutter, then make a cut about one cm down from the cut half of the potato all around the circumference of the potato through to the cookie cutter. Then it should be really easy remove the excess potato from around the cookie cutter to reveal a raised shape (stamp) that you can print with! (There are lots of videos online showing you how to do this if you get stuck on this step)
5. Pat the potato stamp dry with some paper towel
6. Pour some paint onto a plate and use a brush to apply it to the stamp
7. Get printing! Begin by firmly pressing your stamp onto a sheet of paper. How many times you can use your stamp before reapplying the paint?
8. Keep going! You might like to experiment with washing your potato and using it with another colour, or making an artwork that combines several stamp designs and colours
9. Can you repeat this process to create a pattern the fills a whole sheet of paper?
10. You could make other pages with the same repeated pattern and in different colours and show them together like the wallpaper above!
11. Show us your artwork. Please find submission form on page 5.

Reflection

Potato printing is a simple form of relief printing where the inked surface of the potato is brought into contact with a sheet of paper with some pressure. Other examples in the relief family of techniques include woodcut, engraving, linocut, collographs and traditional text printing with movable type.

The wallpaper artwork that inspired this activity is made using a complex printmaking process called photographic screen-printing. In this process a mesh (usually silk) is used to transfer ink onto paper or fabric through a custom-made photographic stencil that blocks off parts of the screen.

Investigate the history of print-making and find out how the invention of the printing press changed our world.

FURTHER READING

John Wolseley

One of Australia's most distinguished artists, John Wolseley was born in Somerset, England in 1938 and arrived in Australia in 1976. His work in watercolour, drawing, printmaking and installation over the last 40 years has been a meditation on how the earth is a dynamic system of which we are all a part.

<https://www.johnwolseley.net/>

Stewart Russell

Artist Stewart Russell founded Spacecraft Studio in 2000. Over twenty years he has built a screen-printing practice that specialises in bespoke collaborations with artists and designers.

<https://www.spacecraftaustralia.com>

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Please email this filled in form, and an image of your artwork to frontofhouse@castlemainegallery.com.

Your Details

First name:

Age:

Title of your artwork:

Do you have your parent/guardian's permission to send in this artwork? Please tick box to confirm:

Do you and your parent/guardian agree to the CAM KIDS RULES: Terms and Conditions below?

Please tick box to confirm:

CAM will try to showcase all artworks that are submitted in our online gallery, but they have to be within CAM KIDS RULES (Terms and Conditions). Once you fill in this form and email your artwork we will check it in the next week.

CAM KIDS RULES: Terms and Conditions

Read this section with your parents or guardian:

1. CAM staff will check all artworks before they go online to make sure they are suitable for everyone. We will use our discretion to make sure the artwork is not rude or scary for others before it is published,
2. Please don't include yourself in photos of your artwork.
3. If you send us your artwork, it means that you and your parents/guardian are happy for CAM to publish it in our KIDS gallery and promotions now and into the future.
4. When you send us your artwork, it should be work that you've created. Make sure you only use your first name when submitting artworks.

Thank you for your time and your work!