

Lesson Plan 4:

The Art of Words: A study of Turkish Calligraphy

Printmaking inspired by Turkish Calligraphic Arts

Age: 5th Grade

Class Sessions: 2-3 classes

Focus: To explore traditional Islamic calligraphy and the Tugra. And to explore the process of relief printmaking and the two art forms we have learned about to make prints.

Objectives:

- L5.4 The student will show an awareness of using line to create the feeling of movement within a composition.
- S5.7 The student will develop a beginning understanding of positive and negative shape.
- D5.14 The student will introduce balance, movement, emphasis, and simplicity (knowing when to stop) to help create a unified composition.

Instructional Materials:

- Slide presentation of Turkey: especially their calligraphy and its use in everyday life.
- Color Xerox (laminated) posters, cards, and templates of Turkish calligraphy and Tugra.
- Books on Turkish calligraphic arts as well as calligraphy in general.

Art Materials:

Calligraphy Practice

- newsprint
- ink or watercolors
- watercolor or calligraphy brushes
- water and cups

Printmaking

- Carbon paper
- Linoleum printing block
- Cutting tools
- Pencil
- Waterbased printing ink
- Brayer (ink roller)
- Ink slab (glass, large tray, cookie sheet, wax or aluminum covered board)
- Printing press (or burnishing tool)
- Variety of paper, or fabric to print on

Introduction: “Handwriting is jewelry fashioned by the hand from the pure gold of the intellect” (Irwin 254) This is what an authority on Islamic calligraphy wrote. Writing and calligraphy is closely associated with Islam through it’s sacred text, the Koran. Writing in much of the Islamic world is the most honored art for there is. It adorns their whole world, from books to ceramics, metal and wood works, textiles, and architecture. And over the years many calligraphic styles have emerged. There are two main kinds of calligraphic scripts: Kufic, the more linear and rhythmic design of the types; and cursive which we still use today and see more of in the western style of calligraphy. Artisans used this Kufic style when creating *Tugra*. A type of seal or symbol for the sultans. The most famous of these *Tugra* is Süleyman I’s. He was the leader of Turkey in their Golden age of art, and his seal can be found all over Turkey still today. Many calligraphy writings and took on a form that meant something, and the marks had less meaning as letters. Like in images were the marks make ships or birds, and the marks become outlines and allow movement and a visually beautiful mark. What we are doing in this lesson is letting the students become comfortable with the feel of creating line and developing their own calligraphic marks and then moving to making their own *Tugra*. By then turning it into a print, the student is able to produce multiples of their seal just like Süleyman did, as well as getting them comfortable with the printing process.

Procedure:

Class 1: Present PowerPoint on traditional Turkish Art of the Near East, focusing Islamic/ Turkish/ Arabic calligraphy. Having the calligraphy supplies ready, let the students experiment with mark making. Remind them that the marks don’t have to resemble the alphabet. Once they have become comfortable with the process have them use the calligraphy technique to make a symbol representing themselves: a *tugra*.

Class 2: Using the carbon paper, the student s can transfer the *tugra* onto the linoleum block. Be sure to trace the reverse of the image, so that when it prints, it does so in the right direction. After the image is on the block, have the student decide what they want to print: the *tugra* marks, itself, or the space around the *tugra*. They can then cut away the linoleum that they do not want to print. It is very important to have them follow the safety instructions on this part of the lesson, so as to avoid injuries. Heating the linoleum by ironing it can make it easier to cut and therefore safer. This will probably take the whole class period.

Class 3: Printing time!!! With finished blocks the students are ready to print. Using printing stations with ink and ink slabs, brayers, and either a press or burnishing tools for the students to go is a good solution. With a small amount of ink the students can roll out an ink slab, and then charge the brayer, and ink up the image. They then carefully place the paper on top of the block and run it though the press or use a burnishing tool to force the inked image onto the paper or fabric.

Assessment: Class critique and discussion of the works (informal assessment). Ask yourself: Did the child meet the objectives? Write a simple rubric with the objectives and evaluate the works (formal assessment).

DBAE (Discipline Based Art Education) checklist:

Art History: Islamic Calligraphy, Koran and Mosques

Art Criticism: discussion on Islamic calligraphic design and critique of student artworks

Aesthetics: discussion on the Islamic aesthetic of calligraphic design

Art Production: print of Turkish/Islamic/ Arabic designed calligraphy

Childs Name: _____

Class: _____

○ Design Qualities: Did the child integrate these qualities into their drawings?

• Arabesque _____

• Interlacing Patterns

• Imaginative use of organic shapes

• Symmetry _____

○ Did the student use the media appropriately? _____

○ Quality of the Final Presentation _____

Vocabulary

Allah: Arabic for “God”

Anatolia: a vast plateau between the Black and the Mediterranean seas: in ancient usage, synonymous with the peninsula of Asia Minor; the Asian, or eastern part of Turkey (Anatolia Dictionary 1). Ancient name of Asia Minor, from the M.L. *Anatolia*, Greek *Anatole* “the east”, originally “sunrise” (which happens in the east), lit. “a rising above (the horizon)”, from *anatellein* “to rise”, from *ana* “up” + *tellein* “to accomplish, perform” (Anatolia Etymology 1).

Arabesque: (*Rumi* in Arabic) is a type of flowing linear decoration based on plant forms, representing the rhythms of nature.

Biomorphic shapes: organic shapes inspired by plant forms

Calligraphy: the art of writing beautifully *Fine Arts*. line or a group of lines either derived from or resembling letter forms and characterized by qualities usually associated with cursive writing, esp. that produced with a brush or pen.

Interlacing Patterns: a design that repeats itself while overlapping, connecting, and interweaving .

Islam: Arabic word for “surrender to the Will of God” and is the third major world religion. Islam is the principle religion and way of life into eh Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia.

Mosque: An Islamic (Muslim) house of worship of two main types: the *masjid*, used for daily prayer by individuals or small groups; and the *jāmi*, used for large-scale congregational prayer on the Friday Sabbath and holidays.

Muslim: A follower of Islam. Arabic for “one who submits to God”.

Near East: A region of southwest Asia generally thought to include Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the other countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Egypt and Sudan in northeast Africa are sometimes considered part of the region.

Ottoman Empire: (Ottoman Empire also Turkish Empire) A vast Turkish sultanate of southwest Asia, northeast Africa, and southeast Europe. It was founded in the 13th century by Osman I and ruled by his descendants until its dissolution after World War I. Originally a small state controlled by Ottoman or Osmanli Turks, it spread rapidly, superseding the Byzantine Empire in the east.

Süleyman I: (“*the Magnificent*”) 1495?-1566, sultan of the Ottoman Empire 1520-66

Tugra: A *tughra* (طغراء; **Tuğra**) is a calligraphic seal or signature of an Ottoman Sultan that was affixed to all official documents and correspondence. It was also carved on his seal and stamped on the coins minted during his reign.

The *tughra* was designed at the beginning of the Sultan's reign and drawn by the court calligrapher or *nişancı* on written documents. The first *tughra* belonged to Orhan I (1284–1359), the second ruler of the Ottoman Empire and it evolved until it reached the classical form in the *tughra* of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1494–1596).

Tughras served a purpose similar to the cartouche in ancient Egypt. Every Ottoman sultan had his own individual *tughra*.

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