



March 6, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for enrolling your daughter/son in the lesson, *Printing the Prairie*, offered by the *It Starts with Art!* program. Our objective today was to teach the students about the history of the Prairie Print Makers as well as artist Coy Avon Seward and to recognize how this organization influenced printmaking. By looking at various artworks in the Coy Avon Seward Exhibit, the students observed landscape prints, discussed the use of foreground, middle ground, background and orientation in addition to comparing and contrasting the artists' portrayals of the plains. After identifying characteristics of printmaking processes during the gallery portion of the lesson, students were then able to implement their new knowledge in the creation of postcards using relief and collograph printing techniques.

When observing artwork in the gallery, we looked at Coy Avon Seward's print titled, *Summer* and the corresponding litho plate. Other works used in today's lesson were Coy Avon Seward's linocut print, *Threshing Beans*, and the lithograph print, *Modern Mills*, by Lloyd Chester Foltz. We talked about the characteristics of lithography, a planographic type of printmaking based on the idea that water and oil do not mix when transferring a greasy drawing from a plate to a piece of paper. We compared this process to the linocut printmaking technique, a relief print that has the nonprinting areas removed from a block of material.

Our purpose in studying these works was to look at the theme of humans and nature and how this idea is addressed in the subject matter of artworks. Another key idea of today's lesson was that the Prairie Print Makers was an organization established to promote an understanding and appreciation for the art of Kansas while keeping the art affordable to the public through the use of reproductions enabled by printmaking techniques. Students also learned how Coy Avon Seward and other Prairie Print Maker artists used the regional landscape and their personal experiences for their artwork and we discussed the different approaches to the subject matter.

We applied what we learned in the gallery to our project today by exploring the printmaking techniques of relief etching and collagraphy in the studio portion of the lesson. Students created their own editions of prairie themed postcards, which will be exchanged with their peers by mail. This lesson helped students to better understand printmaking techniques, the value of reproductions in art, and how to interpret design elements into landscapes. Most importantly, the students made a personal connection with their surroundings in order to better understand, formulate, and express their own impressions of their "prairie" environment.

Thank you.

Yours truly,
Audrey Baye