Printmaking is an interesting art form because it allows for the repetition of an image and has been used to create graphics in books, newspapers, flyers and playbills. Below you will find some historical printmaking terms as well as some primitive printmaking techniques.

Print: A single print is a piece of paper upon which an image has been imprinted from a matrix. In a general sense, a print is the set of all the impressions made from the same matrix. By its nature, a print can have multiple impressions.

Plate: A plate is a flat sheet of metal, usually copper, steel or zinc, used as a matrix for a print. Metal plates are used for intaglio prints and for some lithographs.

Matrix: A matrix is an object upon which a design has been formed and which is then used to make an impression on a piece of paper, thus creating a print. A woodblock, metal plate or lithographic stone can be used as a matrix.

Watermark: A watermark is a design embossed into a piece of paper during its production and used for identification of the paper and papermaker. The watermark can be seen when the paper is held up to light.

Silkscreen Printing: Silkscreen printing is a technique that uses a woven mesh to support an ink-blocking stencil.

Etching: Etching is the process of using strong acid or mordant to cut into the unprotected parts of a metal surface to create a design in intaglio in the metal. As an intaglio method of printmaking, it is, along with engraving, the most important technique for old master prints, and remains in wide use today.

Isn’t life a series of images that change as they repeat themselves?

Andy Warhol was an American pop artist working in the 1960s who made his way into the art world doing drawings for advertisements and eventually silkscreens of images from and about pop culture. Find images of Warhol’s artwork online or in a book; what famous brands did you recognize in Warhol’s work?

One of the most famous printmakers in history was a Japanese artist named Katsushika Hokusai, who is known for capturing Mt. Fuji in his works from the Edo Period. He was very influential among 19th century French Impressionists. See if you can find this image online or in a book.

To arrange a group tour of the Freedman Gallery, or to have your child participate in one of our afterschool experimental art, music or theatre labs or summer camps, contact Beth Krumholz at 610-921-7776 or bkrumholz@alb.edu.

You can use inkpads and pre-made rubber stamps purchased from a craft store, or you can print objects like flat shells, eucalyptus pods, and pinecone scales by stamping them directly onto paper. This can be done very simply with a minimum of materials: water-based paint or inkpad, a shallow dish, paper to print on, and used news-paper or a folded towel. The stamping technique is simple. Just dip the object(s) you choose into the dish of paint or ink pad and stamp them onto the paper with padding (newspaper or folded towel) underneath to cushion the stamping. You can even draw into the background. The repetition of the stamping will reveal a beautiful pattern.
Projects can be done at home, in the classroom, at an art studio or outside. Depending on the age of your child, these activities may require adult supervision and assistance. In most cases, these activities are alternatives to traditional printing techniques.

**Potato or Apple Prints**

For this project you will need an adult to help you with the cutting. The supplies needed include: a few potatoes, metal cookie cutters, craft knife, normal kitchen knife, sponge cloth or roller, and water-based paint. The process is simple: you cut the apple or potato in half and cut a shape into it. Then, apply color and start stamping! You can stamp on white paper, craft paper or even on a roll of register paper, and you can mix your homemade stamp with rubber stamps! You can also use fabric paint and try this technique on a T-shirt by carving erasers.

**Spray Paint**

Using leaves that are flat or have been flattened (ferns are good), attach the leaves to your chosen paper with straight pins (map pins are good) so they don’t move, and using an old toothbrush dipped in ink or paint, splatter the paper so that there is a spray affect around the leaves. This will create a negative shape where the leaf was after you remove it. Wildflowers and evergreens can also be used. This is an interesting way to understand and learn about silhouettes. This can be messy!

**Fish Prints**

For this project you will need a fish from the market — unless you have just been fishing — some ink, a paintbrush and rice paper. Simply brush the ink on the fish after laying it down on a piece of cardboard and affix it with pins. Fish works nicely because of all the fins. Then you press a piece of rice paper into it to “print” it. You do this repeatedly and get different variations of the same print. Let it dry and frame them.