

Printmaking Party and Button Bonanza

Allie Schwartz & Brianna Schwabe
Central Library Children's Room (CLCR)

Audience

Pre-school children, School age children, Teens, Families, Adults, Seniors, Librarians

Description

"Join us during [Milwaukee Zine Fest](#) for an awesome printmaking/button making extravaganza!"

We made small prints and turned them into buttons. The program was in the children's room but open to all ages who are enjoying the festivities.

Budget

\$1-\$50, \$51-\$100

Mixes

- Craft Mix - Box 4: Button Maker 1.5"

Learning outcomes

We will make small prints and turn them into buttons in line with the DIY ethos of Zinefest. The program will be in the children's room but open to all ages.

The program will align with Wisconsin Standards for Art and Design:

- A.A.Cr.4.i: Investigate: Experiment with studio skills, techniques, materials, tools and elements and principles of art and design through practice.
- A.A.Cr.6.i: Make: Utilize more complex media to express an idea and expand knowledge of tools and techniques, with attention to craftsmanship.
- A.A.Pr.4.i: Develop Meaning: Explore and make connections through comparison of artwork from personal, historical, and contemporary artists.

Advance Planning

We plan our calendar several months in advance. We submitted the program proposal in February, but didn't really start preparing for the program until the week before. The major advance prep we had to do was cutting foam core and paper into smaller pieces.

We cut the foam into pieces small enough that they can create a print to fit on a button and can still be inked on a standard size ink pad. For button-size, we went with 2"x2" resulting in 150 pieces per board. If someone wanted to make a larger print (for a button or just to keep), we also cut some 3"x4" which gave us 50 pieces per board. Regardless of the size, we peeled off the paper backing from one side. That way the pieces were still firm enough to handle when printing, but one side was soft enough to draw into (relatively) clearly.

Marketing

The event was included in MPL's Zine Fest marketing and part of the online calendar. On the day of the event, we decorated a big white board to point patrons into CLCR to participate.

Budget Details

Budget Category	Brief Description	Amount
Supplies	Ink pads (2 black, 1 red, 1 blue)	\$16 for four (purchased through Office Depot)
Supplies	Foam core board	\$20 for ten 20"x30" boards purchased at the dollar store. We only used ~3-4 for the program, but given Zine Fest attendance (~1500 people) we wanted to be prepared.

The cost will be higher if you have to buy additional button supplies. We had a stash at Central, so that wasn't needed.

Day-of-Event Activity

The technique for the project is quite simple. You draw your image into the foam with a pen or pencil, ink it on an ink pad, and then print it on your paper. You can make a single image, a repeating pattern, or a tessellating pattern. You can also layer the same or different prints in multiple colors for really interesting effects. This video shows the process:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fs4XJ9heDo>

People could keep their print as is, or make it into a button. The button makers come with a circle punch so you can accurately cut the print to the appropriate size for the machine.

We set up the space with two long tables with chairs around each. Printmaking was at one table, and button-making was at the other. We were set up right at the front of the children's room, so that folks wouldn't have to go too far to participate and also so we could help out at the reference desk if needed.

Program Execution

We were very busy the entire 3-hour period we did the program, so much so that we weren't able to get any pictures from the event. We had requested teen volunteers from our Teen Advisory Board to assist us. Unfortunately none were available to help, and I think with that help the program would have gone a lot smoother. If we were doing the program on a normal Saturday, I think it would also have been a lot smoother. Since this was a large event with massive attendance, we really weren't sure the amount of supplies we'd need so we definitely over-prepared a little. But since we had extra supplies, Brianna brought the activity to the end of year Teen Advisory Board meeting and we're already planning to do it again on a normal Saturday.

Program Outcomes and Evaluation

We had 120 people participate in the program, including toddlers and pre-school kids, school age children, teens, adults, and seniors. Everyone had a really fun time, based on the feedback they gave us during the program. The program engaged the families who were already in the children's room, but also brought in an entirely new group that might never have seen the children's room before. We also provided an activity on the first floor when most of the festivities were happening on the second. It was nice to have an area where you could still have fun related to Zine Fest without being completely overwhelmed by the crowds.

Advice

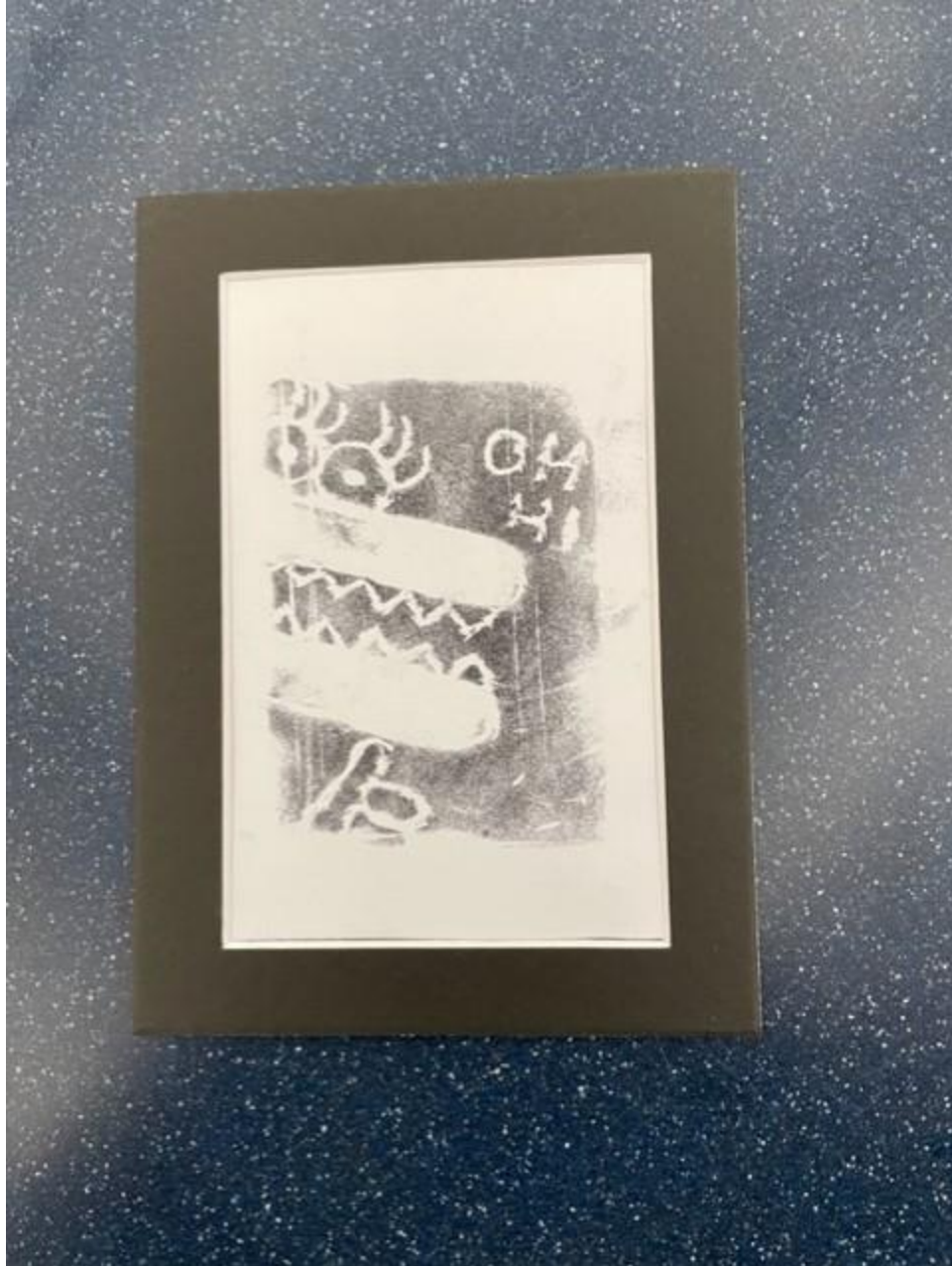
Volunteers would be great. We had one person helping with the printmaking, and the other person operating the button maker. If we had volunteers we could have floated a bit more between stations and provided more engaging guidance to participants. As it was, we were pulled in all directions helping everyone.

I would also recommend that if you do larger prints, make sure the board pieces fit on the ink surface of your pads. We cut our pieces smaller than the stated dimensions of the ink pad, but when it arrived the surface of the ink was recessed a further half inch. It was possible to ink the bigger pieces, but it took more finagling.

Photos



Participants made all kinds of awesome prints. The most difficult aspect was definitely text, which they had to write backwards to make sure it came out forward.



We had larger format pieces of foam and paper if people wanted to make larger prints. We also had some leftover paper frames if people wanted to use them. This piece of foam accidentally got squished by my rolling chair. But I turned those two markings into a thumbs up alligator.



The piece on the left was created by one of our youngest participants (2 years old) and a story time regular, KJ. With mom's help, he went through the entire process (with an average amount of mess) then wore the button around.



Two finished buttons! The one on the left was made by layering two different pattern prints in different colors, created in collaboration with a kiddo.