
Veggie Stamp Picnic Blanket with Christine Schmidt

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview of project

- I'm gonna show you how to magically transform vegetables into fruits to create a cool stamped picnic blanket and tote bag to get you ready for a fun afternoon in the sun. If you wanna keep your stamps out and you have some scrap fabric, you can make a napkin or a place mat. You could use multiple colors to create designs. I mean, mom always said, you better eat your veggies. I'm telling you to stamp with them.

Chapter 2 - Making Stamps

Materials

- You will need textile screen printing ink, assorted root vegetables, a cutting board with a paring knife, a big chef's knife, a big sturdy chef's knife, a lino cutting tool, a DIY stamp pad, canvas, there's an optional straight edge, and an iron for heat setting.

Preparing fabric

- So I just went to the art store and picked out a heavier weight canvas. This one's 12 ounces. I chose a 72 inch length and I had them cut it to size around 60 inches and then I washed it a couple times to make it a little bit softer. I put it in the drier and I removed it right before it was completely dry, so it was a little damp, and I ran my iron across it. It's just a little bit easier to remove the wrinkles that way and I washed it because it makes it soft and I just like washing it because I like the soft texture and I also really enjoy the natural fringe, which can kind of pill on the canvas so before you stamp you want to make sure you remove all these little cotton nubbins. This is a pretty big project so if you don't have room on your kitchen table, just use the floor. Anything, any surface that's flat and clean will do.

Selecting and cutting vegetables

- Alright, now we're gonna carve some fruit stamps out of vegetables. So I've really let mother nature do a lot of the work here. I've selected these root vegetables in different shapes and sizes, and I just really let their natural forms guide my stamp designs. It's really important that your root vegetables are clean, and dry, and firm to the touch. So I think I'm gonna go easy at first, and make a little blueberry stamp. So I've selected a radish. Radishes are nice and round. This is gonna be super easy. I'm just gonna hold my knife really straight and make a clean cut. It's really important that you have a completely flat surface here. If you're unsure if the surface is flat, just place it onto your stamp pad, and it's evenly inked, which means the surface is flat and ready to carve. I wanna make a little blueberry here. I've taken the blades out my linoleum carving tool and I'm just gonna hold it in my hand 'cause these are just such tiny little cuts. I'm gonna make the little divots for the blueberry stem. That one is ready to go. Next, I'm going to take a turnip or rutabaga. This one's actually, I'm gonna take a turnip. And I want a watermelon. And I chose this vegetable because it was really huge at the market and I thought that was cool. And I want a different, I wanna kinda play with scale. I've got my tiny blueberry. I want a larger watermelon. So again, I just made a cut with my sturdy knife. I cut the rutabaga in 1/2, and then I'm gonna place the flat side down on the cutting board and make another cut. Again, just making sure that the surface is completely flat. And I think

that looks good. I'm just gonna press it on my ink pad. And the surface looks good. We're ready to carve. So for the watermelon, I'm just again taking my tiny detail gouge. I'm just gonna go around following the natural contour of the vegetable to make the watermelon rind. Each one is gonna look different because each of the vegetables are gonna be shaped differently. Now I'm gonna go in with my seeds. (clicks tongue) Hey, little guys. Turnips are a little bit more fibrous, so you can't get a whole lot of detail. But it's perfect for a little thing like this where I'm kind of using the current vegetable form. Alright. Let me just scrape those off. Actually, just gonna wipe them off really quickly. And I'm pretty happy with that. That one's ready to go, too. Next, I'm going to do a little lime wedge. So I'm going to take a potato. Cut it widthwise. Pressing it onto the stamp pad, and looks evenly inked. So for a lime wedge, I'm gonna cut this in 1/2 to get a 1/2 circle. Mm. I like this one better. So for this one, just like the watermelon, I'm gonna give a little perimeter carve here. Holding it carefully. See, sometimes I'll use the tool, and other times I'll just take the blade out. It's really up to you. And now I'm just gonna do the little radiating wedges like this. You wanna just carve the top surface. You don't wanna go too deeply into the vegetable, because you're gonna crack it and your line's gonna get really messy. So just think about peeling a carrot and how you just remove the top layer. And again, with relief printing, it's kind of opposite day 'cause you carve away what you don't want to see on your print. Alright, lime wedge is looking good. Let's do a banana. For the banana, I'm gonna use a sweet potato 'cause it has sort of a similar curve to the banana. But it needs some help. I think I'm gonna give it a little stem up here. And for this one, I'm using a larger gouge, a larger V-gouge. Sweet potatoes are a little bit more firm, so they can take a little bit more detail to get a good big, flat surface. Gives me a little more flexibility with my design. Now I'm gonna go around and carve the other side of the banana. Again, just looking at the exterior contours of the sweet potato, kinda letting that guide me. And here we go. Kind of a soft shape there. And I wanna give it one more little line to kinda mimic that ridge that bananas have. Okay. Alright, I'm pretty excited about this. Now I wanna take my paring knife. It's gonna help me carve the outside shape. I'm just gonna take off the sides. Be really careful. It's easy to cut yourself with this one. Really, you wanna make sure that your knives are always sharp. It's so much easier to cut yourself when your knives are dull. Your fingers are worth it. Now there I kind of hit. I was going a little bit too far. So I'm gonna come at it from the other side. I just want a smooth line. And again, I don't wanna crack out my design. So you can always carve more. You can't take it away. Alright. Hm. I'm not really liking this little nubbin. It's a little rotten, and I just wanna get rid of it. So I'm just gonna clean that up a little bit. Okay. Yeah. I like it. Let's see how she prints. There's good surface here, but I'm not liking these little edges. So I'm just gonna come back in with my paring knife and take those out. Okay, now she's ready to print. Last, we're gonna carve a strawberry. Just gonna take potato, and cut it in 1/2. That's a good smooth surface. I'm gonna load my littlest blade. Nah, I'm gonna take it out. Do it freehand. Hm. First I'm gonna start with the stem. Like this. Potatoes are really the softest to carve. Which makes it very satisfying. Just gonna give it a little, a few little leaves on top here. And I'm starting with the stem because I wanna make sure it looks stemmy. We have more flexibility with the shape and size of the berry. But I think I really want the stem to be pointy, so I'm starting with that first. You could also do the stem alone and stamp the strawberry in red, and the stem as a separate stamp in green. But I'm gonna do it in one. I'm gonna do it in one. Alright, now I'm just gonna make the outside curve of my strawberry. Mm, I don't like that. I'm gonna make it a little bit more narrow. I'm pretty pleased with that. So I'm just gonna go back in and give it the little divots to give it that strawberry character. Kind of radiating out from the bottom. Just little guys, and you can kinda see I'm just digging in, taking out, digging in, taking out. It's nice to have line variety. Have

some that are a little bit smaller, and others that are a little bit bigger. It just gives the stamp more character. Okay. Mm, actually, I'm gonna separate my stem a little bit more by accentuating the lines that make up the stem. Okay. Yeah, I'm into it. Now I wanna go back in with my paring knife and take out the portion that I do not want to print. Working very carefully with my knife. My paring knife is now just gonna go along the lines of the stem. 'Cause I just wanna take that surface away entirely. So rather than carve these out, I'm using my paring knife 'cause it makes a nice, crisp line. Almost there. Oh, this would be great for a pineapple, too. A lot of possibilities. Okay. Now I'm just gonna check it (pounding) with my ink to make sure. So I can see here that some of the edges, I haven't really cut away entirely. But I'm gonna keep 'em in there to kind of give it character, and I like it. Well, now I've carved five stamps. I think that's a good variety in both size and shape. We are ready to start printing.

Chapter 3 - Stamping Blanket

Inking Border

- I've laid my canvas on my flat surface. I like a table 'cause it's a good height. And I'm ready to get going. I'm not really big into measuring. But I do know that the sides are square. So I'm just gonna start by creating a border with my watermelons. Use both hands to give it a good press. Oh yeah, that looks great. I'm just gonna keep going here. I'm gonna go around the entire perimeter of the canvas to create a watermelon border. You know, I think I'm gonna do a brick repeat, which means, it's just a type of pattern where I'm gonna put the next watermelon in between these two watermelons. So I just place this watermelon in between these two watermelons. It's a pattern called brick repeat. You just think about a brick wall, how this kind of... Brick like that, just gonna keep going here. I'm getting a good, smooth impression. Canvas is a rough fabric, so some of the tooth of the fabric is gonna shine through, and I actually like that. It gives it a good worn in quality, that I enjoy. I'm gonna do my third row, beginning. Now, this one is a little bit lighter. Because my stamp is actually cut around exactly to the shape of the stamp, I can easily reapply. Reapply to make a second impression over the first, to make it a little bit darker. I really like the variety, though. This is a fun project. Don't stress about it. I didn't really make a plan for my design, I'm kinda winging it. That's just how I roll. I'm trying to keep a straight line, but... No biggie if you don't. I've come to the edge of the table here, so I just need to scoot down my fabric to continue the pattern. Here we go. Just working bit by bit, rotating the canvas on the table as I need. Yeah, watermelons. I think I'm going to do... I'm gonna try the banana now. I want to give the stamp a good heavy coat. And, I'm gonna go at a little angle here, in between my watermelon hills. Hmm. I missed a little bit there, so I'm just gonna line it up again. There we go. There we go, just fill that in a touch. I'm gonna continue this little line. I'm gonna space out my bananas, because the watermelons are a very solid design, and this way there's just a little break in the composition. Just for a little more visual interest. I'm also rotating the stamp on the stamp pad. This one's a little bit longer, so it's a little more challenging to print. Pop in some more ink. I am digging the line of bananas. I think now I want to do the blueberries. So, yeah, I'm gonna do this with a straight edge, just because the blueberries are really small, and they're gonna go really quickly. And I don't want to take the time to keep lining them up. This is just a fast way to go. Move over, banana. Okay. I'm just shooting for a parallel line. So I've lined up my straight edge to be parallel with the edge of the blanket, which I know is straight. I'm just gonna start... I'll start in the middle. And again, I'm inking every time. The radishes have a cool little pattern themselves, 'cause they're a little more rigid around the edges. And I actually really like the outline they're creating. Sorta fast. Okay, I like that. I think it's time for some

strawberries. I'm gonna do another little line of these guys. I'm gonna space 'em out a little bit more. And the blueberries. I think that's good. Keep on moving. This would be a really fun project to do with a friend. It certainly would go a lot faster. And then you two could go for a picnic. These are printing really well into these strawberries. I've got one more strawberry left. You know, if you come across any more of these little nubbins, use a clean hand, and just take them off. You could also just use a little bit of tape to remove them as well. I'm pretty satisfied with this design. I am gonna continue this pattern along all four edges. And I have saved one more stamp, so I can do something really special in the center.

Creating the center pattern

- I finished stamping my border and I'm pretty happy about it. I wanna do something a little bit different in the center, but first I wanna add more ink to my stamp pad. So I'm just gonna peel up the felt, pour a little bit more of that red on there, and place it right back down. So, the only stamp I haven't used is a lime wedge, and I think I wanna do kind of a little circular pattern here, so I placed a paper plate just kind of my eye center. You could measure if you like. Making sure it's nicely inked, I'm gonna put the plate here. Hmm, I like that. I wanna catch a little bit more of that this piece right here, so I'm gonna press that down really well into the stamp pad, and just move around in a circle. You know, I really didn't have a plan for this blanket, but I think a circular pattern will contrast nicely with the rectangular borders. Your eyes are always naturally drawn to contrast so it's good to mix it up. You could of course plan this out and sketch if you like, but I think not having a plan is pretty fun, because then the end product is always a big surprise. I was just using this plate as a guide to create the circular pattern, so now I can just remove it. Okay, I like it, but I think I wanna define the circle a little bit more, so I'm gonna go in with my blueberry and stamp in between these little wedges. Just closing the circle a little bit. Again, it doesn't really have to be a perfect circle. Because we used that guide, and that circle is perfect, relatively, I mean, everything else about this blanket is really handmade. There's nothing that has to be pristine about it. Okay, I like that, but I think I want a little more sprawl for the design, so I'm gonna try a banana. Banana hasn't been inked in a while, so I'm just making sure I have a good solid coat on there. I think I'm gonna stick the banana stem just right in between this lime wedge. I'm gonna do, you know what, I'm just gonna do one over here. Like that. I'm just kinda thinking of hands on a clock, 12, three, six, and nine. I think I'm gonna actually fill in the rest of it with bananas, maybe going every other one. I'm not certain. This is part of the play of it. You know what, now that I'm looking at it I think I'm just gonna do it in between every lime wedge. Looks like a sun. Sun rays. Some happy fruits. I could've done this design with a bunch of different colors, a green lime wedge, or a yellow banana, but I knew I was gonna have a very busy design, and I thought that if I just used one color, made it monochromatic, the shapes of the stamps would really shine. Okay, I like this. I'm just gonna do one strawberry in the center. Now I am just gotta wait for this blanket to dry, and then I'm gonna heat set it so it will be machine washable, and then I'm gonna go out for a picnic.