Max Ernst Leaf Rubbings

LESSON OVERVIEW:
Students will create frottage inspired leaf rubbings in the spirit of surrealist, Max Ernst, using a variety of plant life.

TIME AND DURATION: 1 hour suggested
• 5 minutes for demonstration and overview of project

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:
• Student will learn about frottage techniques
• Student will learn about surrealist, Max Ernst
• Student will create a variety of frottage drawings using plants

CONNECTION TO THE BECHTLER COLLECTION:
Students will view artwork created by Max Ernst, focusing on his frottage methods. For more inspiration on composition and techniques, students can look at additional surrealist artists in the collection, including Salvador Dali and Joan Miro.
VOCABULARY AND DEFINITIONS:

- **Max Ernst** – A German modern artist who was a primary pioneer for the Dada and surrealist movements
- **Frottage** – A surrealist and ‘automatic’ method of creative production that involves creating a rubbing of a textured surface using a pencil or other drawing tool; The technique was developed by surrealist artist, Max Ernst
- **Surrealism** – A 20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind
- **Abstract** – Art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colors, and textures
- **Texture** – An element of two-dimensional and three-dimensional designs that is the way something feels to the touch or looks to the eye
- **Pattern** – An arrangement of alternated or repeated elements (shapes, lines, colors)
- **Line** – An element of design this is an identifiable path created by a point moving in space and is one-dimensional and can vary in width, direction, and length; Lines often define the edges of a form and can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, straight or curved, thick or thin
- **Organic shapes and lines** – Shapes and lines that contain curves
- **Geometric shapes and lines** – Shapes and lines that contain straight edges
- **Contour Line Drawing** – An outline drawing that uses no shading

MATERIALS:

- Drawing paper (or any thinner paper)
- Graphite pencils
- Colored pencils
- Pastels
- Found leaves/plant life
- Markers
PROCEDURES:

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:
• Students should have basic understanding of line and shape

PROCESS:
• Prior to class, students will collect a variety of leaves with strong and healthy veins
• After a brief introduction to frottage and Max Ernst, students will practice the frottage technique using their found leaves
• Using graphite pencils, colored pencils, or pastels, students will lay leaves below thin drawing paper and shade over the leaves to recreate the patterns of the leaves’ veins
  - Students can experiment with different leaves and colors, overlapping patterns to create new designs
  - After students have practiced the frottage techniques, students will draw contour line drawings of objects, animals or shapes using graphite
  - Students will fill in their contour line drawings by using the frottage techniques, only shading over leaves within their contour line drawings
  - Once finished with one or multiple frottage drawings, students have the option of adding to their work with markers, colored pencils, pastels, or crayons

Examples:
- Using the frottage method to fill in a contour line drawing
- Contour line drawing placed over leaves
- Frottage technique example using colored pencil
- Example artwork
PROTIPS:
- Using different amounts of pressure while shading over textures will make the veins in the leaves more or less prominent.
- Students can use stencils to create their contour line drawings before filling in using the frottage method.
- Other textured objects, like tree bark and stone, can be used to create unique patterns.

POPULATION + MODIFICATION:
The Bechtler has used this lesson with InReach. This lesson can be modified for all skill levels and ages.