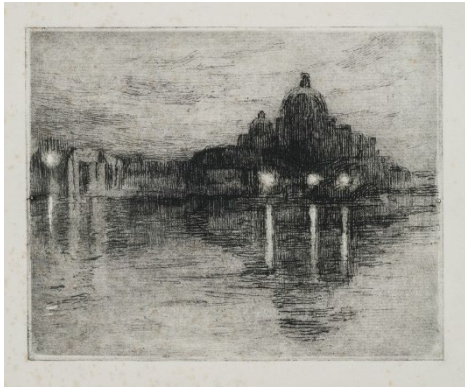


Close Study: Close Viewing Ellen Day Hale

Artist: [Ellen Day Hale](#) (1855, Worcester, Massachusetts–1940, Brookline, Massachusetts)



Works:

Left: Ellen Day Hale, *First Night in Venice*, 1890; Soft-ground etching with aquatint on paper, 8 x 10 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Right: Ellen Day Hale, *First Night in Venice*, 1890; Soft-ground etching with aquatint on paper, 7 1/2 x 9 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

About the Artwork: In this pair of etchings, Hale depicted [Santa Maria della Salute](#), a Baroque church on Venice's Grand Canal, at dusk. Many of Hale's etchings feature sharp, clean lines, but these images exemplify a more impressionistic style. She attained this atmospheric effect through a combination of soft-ground and aquatint etching techniques. The softer surface of the printing plate used in soft-ground etching produces thick, blurry lines. Aquatint involves powdering the printing plate to produce tiny dots that create areas of even tone.

Hale further experimented with her colored image of the church by adding *à la poupée* inking, in which colored ink is applied directly to the printing plate using swabs of cotton. Through her combination of techniques, the print resembles an ink and watercolor wash drawing.

Target grade range: 3–5

DCPS Curricular Unit: A Chance Print

DCPS Curricular Arc: Creation/Trusting

Adapted from DCPS's "Close Study: A Critical Process" and "Close Study: Close Viewing" documents.

DCPS Curricular Theme: The role of control versus chance through printmaking

Note: Annotation is a key feature of Close Study, ensuring that students are engaged in the process of evidence gathering. Annotation can take a range of forms across grade levels and disciplines. Annotation can provide assessment information as to each student's depth of comprehension. Additionally, it can be a useful tool for launching critical discussions. Encourage students to annotate this work physically or virtually.

Round 1

Type of Question: General Understanding/Responses

Sample Question: **What are these artworks about? What do you see that makes you think that?**

Guidance: The goal of this conversation is to generate a range of student responses to the work. There is no wrong answer, but rather the idea is to open the conversation and create an environment in which students see the value of both their own opinion and the possible range of opinions.

Round 2

Type of Question: Key Details

Sample Questions: **How are these artworks similar to one another? How are these artworks different from each other?**

Guidance: The conversation should focus on gathering evidence from the image; formal and technical evidence, as well as evidence based on the imagery. Student responses should include discussion of specific visual aspects of the work. You may ask guiding questions such as **"How would you describe the lines in these artworks?"** OR **"What colors did the artist use? How would you describe the mood (feeling) of each work based given its color palette?"** pushing students to focus on the visual aspects of the work and how they might begin to support the responses discussed in Round 1.

Round 3

Type of Question: Structure

Sample Questions: **Which of these artworks do you prefer? What compositional elements draw you to one more than the other?**

Guidance: This discussion should focus more specifically on how the structure of the work is supporting the students' interpretations of the work. This conversation might be around compositional strategies, the use of evocative visual designs, or the inclusion of distinct features.

Round 4

Type of Question: Intent/Inferences

Sample Questions: **These artworks are prints. To make them, Ellen Day Hale used an [intaglio printmaking process](#), by which she created an image using different techniques (e.g., [soft-ground etching](#) and [aquatint](#)) to make marks into a matrix (solid surface); added ink to that matrix; placed a piece of paper on top of the inked matrix; and applied pressure to transfer the image from the matrix to the paper. This process results in the original image printing in reverse.**

Hale combines constants (the lines on the matrix) and variables (the color and application methods of ink) to create a series of similar but unique prints representing a particular place and time.

Why might an artist choose to make multiple artworks about the same subject or scene?

Guidance: Unlike the intentional omission of information in other rounds, prior to asking students to respond to this question, the teacher should provide some context for the work. This context should come in the form of another visual work. The nature of the context should promote the goals of the overall lesson or unit. This work might be:

- Another work by the same artist
- A work that serves a similar purpose in a more familiar context
- Another work from the same school, movement, or genre

Possible Contextual Works:

- [Emily Martin](#), *Desdemona in Her Own Words*, 2014; Collagraphs printed on SP Vandercook proof press with rubber based ink in four colors using handset type and wire, wonder foam, flexi-cut, and grit on handmade paper, Arches, Bugra, and Sakamoto papers, 19 x 13 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with the annual contributions of NMWA Book Arts Fellows; © Emily Martin; Photo by Lee Stalsworth
 - **About the Artwork:** Forming a feminist interpretation of Shakespeare's play *Othello*, Martin's book includes both prints and word magnets. The magnets represent the words spoken by Desdemona in the play, which Martin rearranged into more forceful lines of dialogue. She incorporated these texts into her print images of Shakespeare's heroine. In addition to her work as a book artist, Martin is renowned for her inventive animation and puppet designs.

- [Nicola López](#), *Urban Transformation #1–6*, edition 8/12, 2009; Etching, lithography, and woodcut with Mylar elements, 30 x 30 in.; Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer; Photo by Aaron Wessling Photography
 - **About the Artwork:** López's dense compositions evoke urban landscapes in flux through a combination of etching, lithography, and woodcut, resulting in remarkably textured surfaces. Here, the remnants of urban industry appear to collapse in on themselves and, at the same time, to explode outward. Remnants and tentacles spill over their borders, creating a clever trompe l'oeil effect.

Round 5

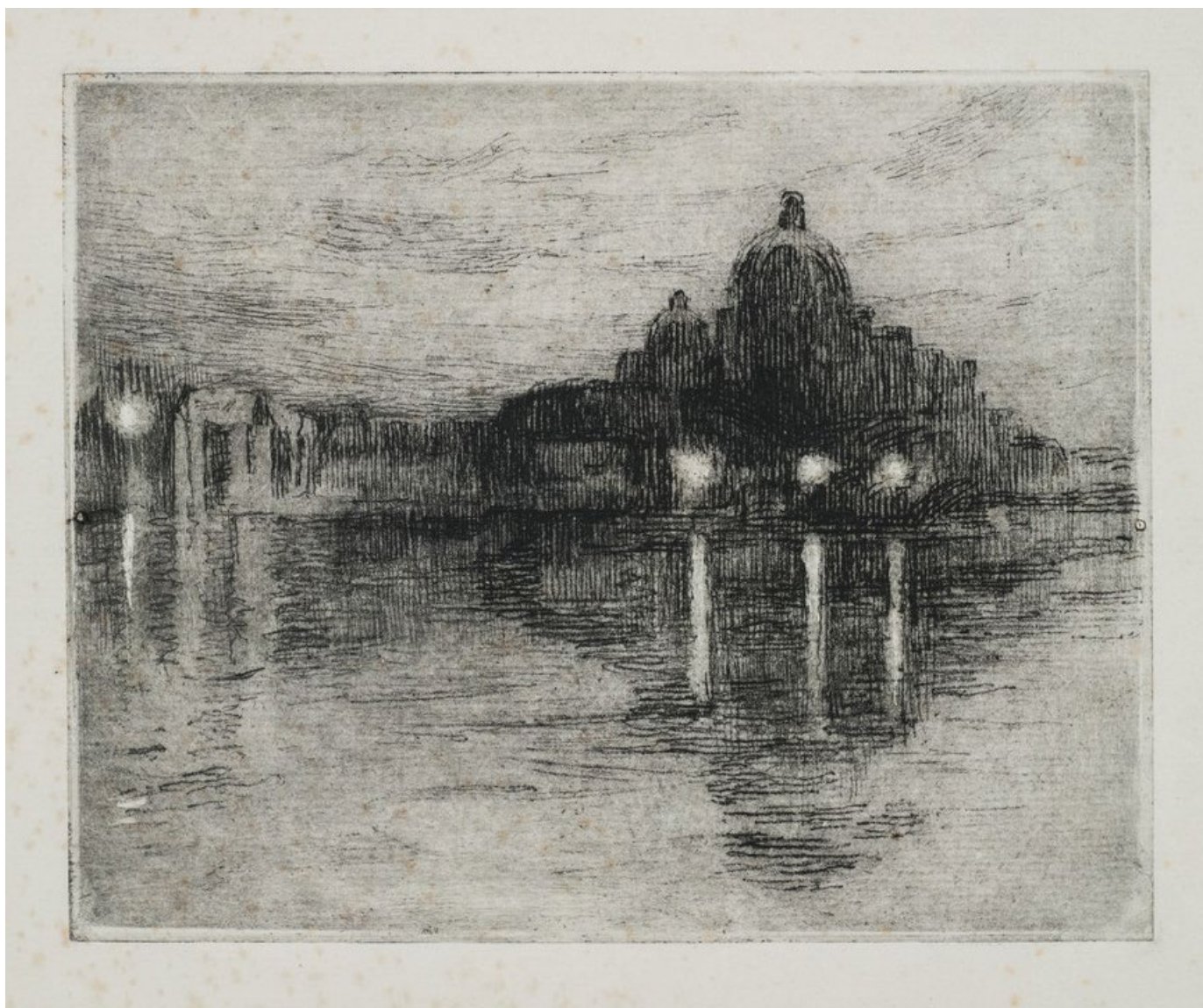
Type of Question: Opinion/Application

Sample Questions: **Experimenting with variables and chance play a role in printmaking. The depth and width of marks in a matrix (i.e., intaglio and [relief](#) prints of Ellen Day Hale and Nicola López); the height and stability of elements collaged onto a matrix (i.e., [collagraph](#) prints of Emily Martin); the viscosity (thickness and stickiness) of the ink; the method(s) used to apply ink to a matrix and the consistency of that application; and the amount of pressure applied during the transfer process are but a few elements that can impact the look of a final print.**

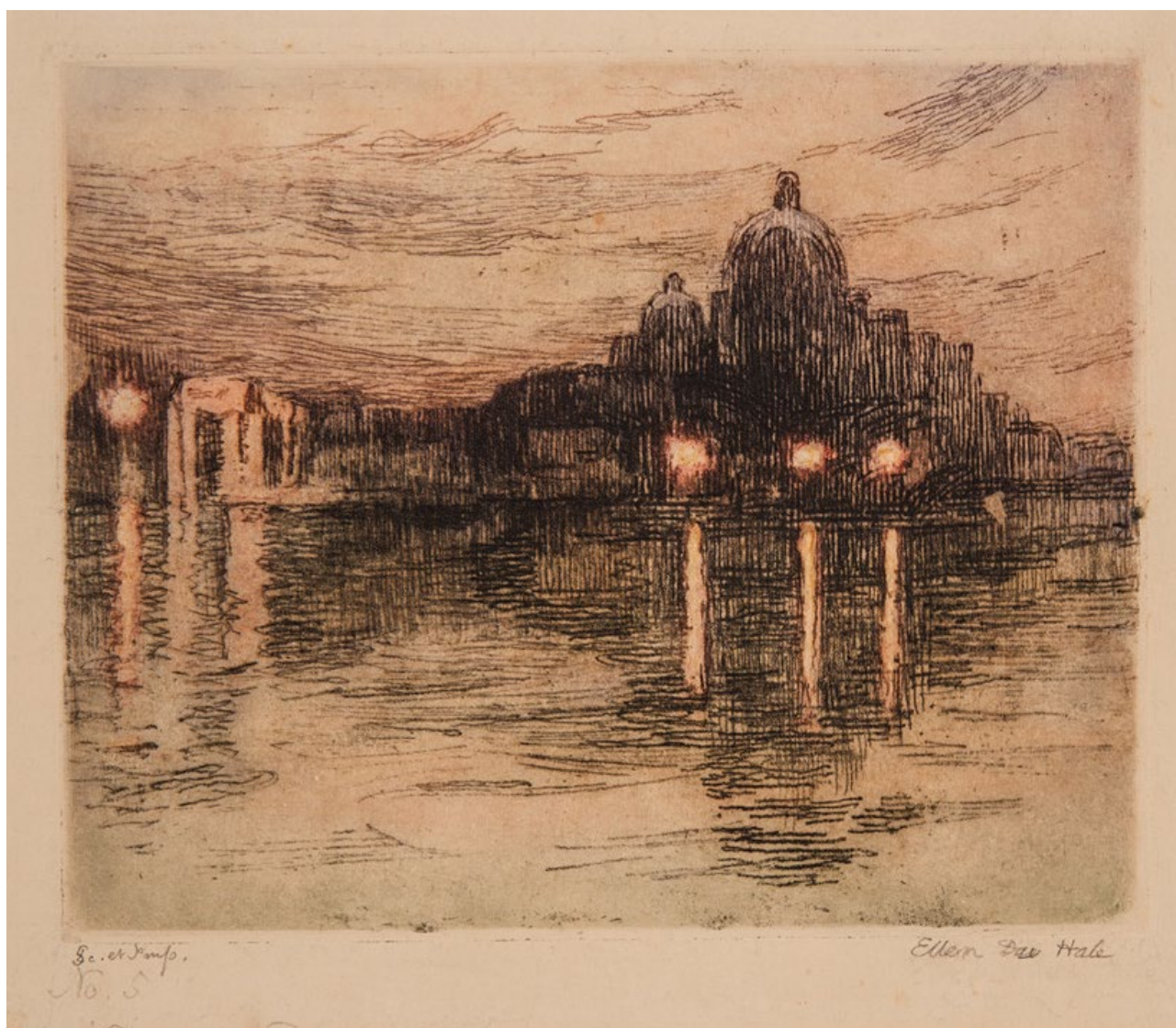
Surprise is also a factor in printmaking. Once a matrix is inked and covered by a sheet of paper, the artist doesn't see the resulting print until pressure is applied.

If you were to make a series of six to eight prints, 1) what would your subject be, 2) what would your controls (elements that remain the same across prints) be, and 3) what would you change or vary between prints?

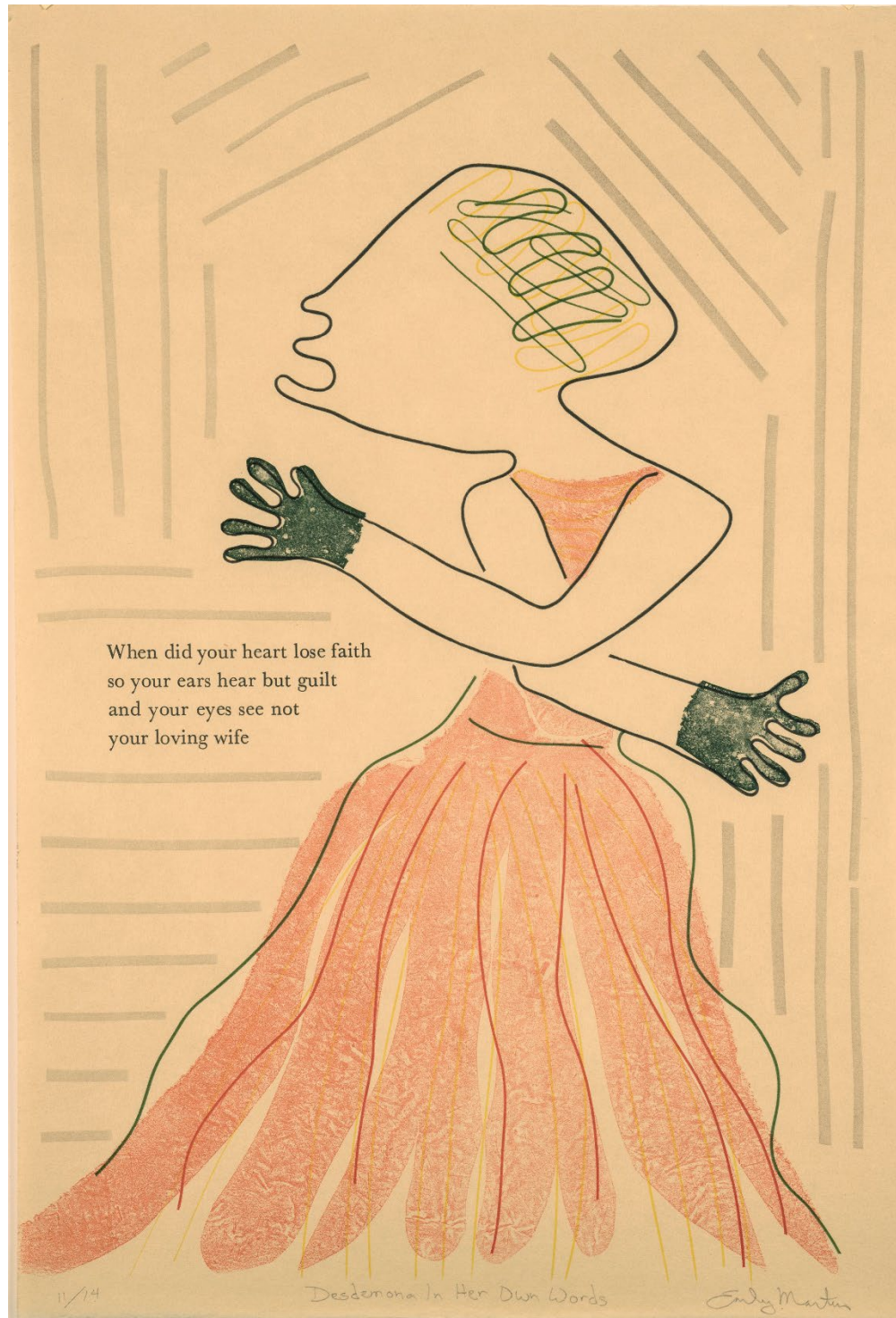
Guidance: This round is asking students to internalize the knowledge and information built in the previous rounds by using the concepts generated to visualize a work that applies to a personal goal of communication. The direction of this question is directly related to the broader thematic goal of the lesson or unit.



Ellen Day Hale, *First Night in Venice*, 1890; Soft-ground etching with aquatint on paper, 8 x 10 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth



Ellen Day Hale, *First Night in Venice*, 1890; Soft-ground etching with aquatint on paper, 7 1/2 x 9 3/4 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photo by Lee Stalsworth



Emily Martin, *Desdemona in Her Own Words*, 2014; Collagraphs printed on SP Vandercook proof press with rubber based ink in four colors using handset type and wire, wonder foam, flexi-cut, and grit on handmade paper, Arches, Bugra, and Sakamoto papers, 19 x 13 in.; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Purchased with the annual contributions of NMWA Book Arts Fellows; © Emily Martin; Photo by Lee Stalsworth



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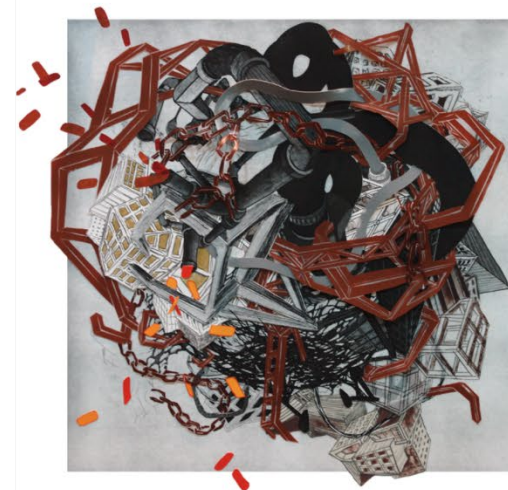
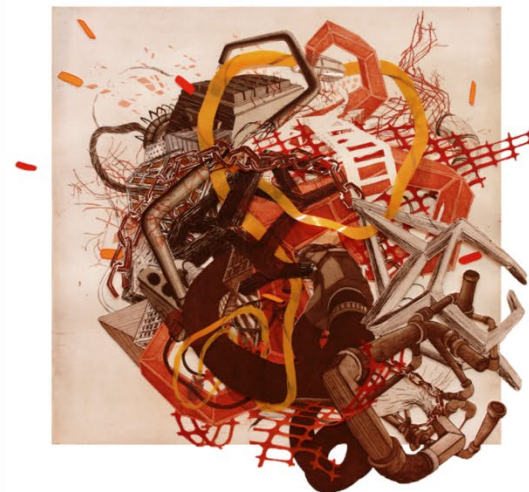
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Nicola López, *Urban Transformation #1*, edition 8/12, 2009; Etching, lithography, and woodcut with Mylar elements, 30 x 30 in.; Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer; Photo by Aaron Wessling Photography



Nicola López, *Urban Transformation #5*, edition 8/12, 2009; Etching, lithography, and woodcut with Mylar elements, 30 x 30 in.; Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer; Photo by Aaron Wessling Photography



Nicola López, *Urban Transformation #1-6*, edition 8/12, 2009; Etching, lithography, and woodcut with Mylar elements, 30 x 30 in.; Collection of Jordan D. Schnitzer; Photo by Aaron Wessling Photography