

Japanese Printmaking

Purpose:

This is a lesson that will introduce students to the ancient Japanese printmaking and allow the student to make their own prints.

Rational:

Student will develop their artistic and creative skills while gaining knowledge about Japanese printmaking.

Materials:

- Teacher notes
- Linoleum Squares (Three for each student.)
- Gauging Tools
- Ink
- Paper
- Teacher notes
- National Geographic “Living Treasures of Japan,” available at most libraries.
- Rubric

Activities:

Pre-teaching

Ask the students the following questions to explore their prior knowledge.

- How many of you have done printmaking in Elementary school?
- Have you tried layered stamps?
- How about coloring your prints?
- What are the characteristics of Wood block prints?
- Is there a theme to the prints?

Use these questions to test prior knowledge and introduce subject matter.

Have student sketch 3 ideas for their own print

Show video National Geographic “Living Treasures of Japan,” available at most Libraries.

Give Instruction and Begin Work

Distribute rubric.

Review with student the printmaking process. (See “Printmaking Notes”) Work together step by step or allow more freedom as the students can handle.

Collect the Worksheets and debrief each station asking the students to review what they learned from each station.

Assessment:

Use rubric to assess projects.

Grade Adaptation:

This lesson is intended for students in the middle school but it is easily modified.

- 1) Use of more or less colors and therefor more ore less blocks.
- 2) The quality of the student's work can be modified for grade level.

What is a Good Print?

In printmaking there is a type of quality range between each and every print, in other words some prints are “good” and some prints are “bad.” I have created a series of guidelines to refer to and follow throughout our printmaking lesson so that you will be able to judge for yourself what is “good” and what is “bad.”

A print that is of high quality or is “good” should meet all of the following criteria:

1) The ink on the print should be consistently even throughout each individual print. Ink should not be faded, bubbled, splotted, smeared, or dripped in any place on your print. If any of the above is used for artistic purposes they need to be done on every edition in your series so that they all look the same.

2) Your image should be centered on your paper so that all borders are even and consistent throughout your series of prints. If you decide to alter the borders for artistic purposes you need to alter the borders on every edition in your series exactly the same way. (This can be accomplished by using registration guides that I will teach you how to do in class)

3) The composition of your print should be interesting and pleasing to the eye. Use the elements of design (line, shape, value, color, texture, form, space) as well as the principles of design (balance, contrast, unity, variety, transition, harmony, dominance, repetition, perspective, focal point, movement/rhythm, objective/non-objective) in order to arrange your subject matter so that it is pleasing to the eye.

4) The material that you print on should be clean and neat. This means that there should be no fingerprints on either the image or the borders and the material should not be wrinkled or torn in anyway.

5) Every print should be labeled in a specific way. In the bottom right corner should be the artist's signature, in the bottom middle of the page should be the title of the piece, and in the bottom left corner should be the edition number of the print. The edition number is always written as a fraction. The top number is the number of the print you are working on at the time, the bottom number is the total number of editions in your series.

6) The three blocks should be aligned so that the prints are seamless in appearance and create an effect that does not look as if three separate blacks were used in the creation of a single print.

*** If you are unsure at any point of the printing process be sure to ask first before doing. It is always better to be safe than sorry***

Printmaking

The process of making prints started more than 1,000 years ago in ancient China and Japan. These cultures used the process as a means of communicating to the masses of people many of who would be illiterate. Before the invention of the printing press in the 17th century people made prints by hand in order to advertise, circulate news, and for other general purposes. Today we have printing presses to expedite our daily printing needs; we have also invented new ways of creating multiple images such as computer printers and copy machines. Because of these new inventions, the need to create hand-made prints for everyday uses is no longer necessary so the process has become a popular art form.

Printmaking Techniques

There are many ways to create prints. Some are very quick and easy while others require a good deal of time and preparation. In our project we will be working in the line engraving style using a material called linoleum. Below is a list and a brief description of the general types of printmaking:

- **Line engraving** - This is a process where an image is cut into a material, usually linoleum or wood, by removing the negative space around it, leaving shallow to deep grooves. Ink is then put onto the raised surface of the material. The material is then either run through a press or paper is placed onto the material and rubbed in order to transfer the image. Images using this method are normally coarse and harsh in the use of lines and shapes.
- **Intaglio** - This is a word that refers to a process where the image is either directly incised (scratched) into a metal plate or drawn on through an acid-resistant coating of wax that has been spread on the surface. In this way the coated metal plate is placed in acid where the exposed metal is eaten away leaving an image that is incised into the surface of the plate. In order to make an image ink is wiped into the incised lines of the image. The plate is then put into a press, which transfers the ink to the paper using intense pressure. This process allows for a variety of lines and effects that are not usually possible with line engraving.
- **Silk Screening** - sometimes called silk screen prints, serigraphs evolved from stencil techniques, which may have been used first by primitive people who pressed colored dyes through holes in thick leaves to repeat designs on fabrics. In this method all the areas around the image are blocked out. It is printed by ink being squeegeed (pressed) through the pores or open holes of the screen that are left unblocked. Silk screening is able to create a wide variety of effects depending on the types of tools used as well as the types of materials and inks that are available.
- **Lithography** - This method differs from the others because the image is transferred chemically. The image is not on a raised surface (line engraving), incised into the surface (intaglio), or on the open portion of a screen (silk screening). The image is drawn onto the surface of a grained stone or metal plate and then

treated chemically so that the image itself is receptive to ink while the area around the image is repellent to ink. Lithographs have a large tonal range, which can mirror the effects of crayons, pen and ink, and watercolor washes.

Subject Matter

When deciding what to make a print of it is important to keep in mind that you are limited in the details and colors that you are able to use. In most cases you will be able to have only two colors, one being the paper you are printing on and the other being the ink that you are using. There are certain designs that tend to lend themselves to the process of printmaking better than others. Simple images that can be broken down into positive/negative shapes are the ones that seem to become the best prints. Certain elements of design are also more useful in printmaking than others such as lines, textures, and shapes. When combined these elements can make very interesting patterns that are pleasing to the eye. It is also very important to develop a well thought out idea before starting your print. By creating an interesting composition in the space provided your finished print will be much more successful.

For the subject matter of your print you will be researching an endangered species. This can be an animal, plant, insect; bacteria or any number of other endangered living creatures. You are also able to combine two or more of these species to create an interesting composition (Remember: one of your goals is to create an interesting composition so be careful in choosing the species). After accumulating a wide variety of images and information on your subject you will be developing your image for your print.

Printing Process

Your first step in creating a print is developing your idea. You will be spending a good deal of time sketching possible compositions for your print. We will be creating prints using three colors so you will need to create three blocks one for each color (Yellow Blue and Red). Once you have developed an idea you will transfer that image to your linoleum blocks using the graphite transfer method (this will be taught in class). Once your image is on your linoleum you will begin to carve out the lines and shapes that you do not want to print (* **Remember whatever material you cut away from your linoleum will not print onto your paper**). After you have completed your cutting you will make several proofs or practice prints so that you can adjust your image if necessary. Once you are happy with the way that your print looks you will begin to make your editions. You will be required to make at least three high quality prints for your project.

Evaluation

- **Effort** - The effort that you put into your project both in class and out of class will effect your final grade. I expect that any time that is given to you in class will be used wisely so that the amount of time spent out of class is not too

overwhelming.

- **Creativity** - In this project there will be many ways to show your creativity. One way will be in the way that you choose to compose your subject matter on the linoleum. You will also be able to show creativity in the materials that you choose to print on.

- **Craftsmanship** - The quality of each of your prints is very important. I will be looking at how well you are able to make a high quality print, how consistent you can be in each of your prints and how neat and clean you can keep your images.

Terms and Definitions

Linoleum - A durable, washable material made in sheets used as a floor and counter-top covering. When used as printmaking material linoleum is ideal. It is soft and flexible allowing the artist a certain margin of error.

Bench Hook - This is a piece of metal that is bent at each end in the opposite direction of the other end. By placing this piece of metal on the table that is being worked on the artist is able to keep the piece that he is working on steady without putting his hands in the way of his gouge.

Gouge - A chisel with a rounded through-like blade. This tool is commonly used in linoleum and wood block printing. By changing to various blade types an artist is able to obtain a wide variety of lines.

Braer - A small roller used in printmaking to evenly roll ink onto your printing block

Printing ink - This ink can be either water based or oil based ink. It is specifically formulated to a certain consistency to allow the artist the best possible quality of printing. Inks come in a variety of colors.

Printing press - This is a large tool that is used to apply even pressure over a printing block. The tool consists of a large bed that the artist's printing block rests on and a large barrel. When the lever of the press is turned the bed is slowly fed through the barrel which applies a certain amount of pressure to the block allowing the image to be transferred to a material.

Proof - This is the first or series of first prints that the artist uses for practice. From these prints the artist is able to find any flaws or mistakes that might be in his printing block before he begins to make his final prints.

Edition - This is a series of final prints that the artist makes. A number is usually decided upon before the artist begins the editions. The edition of the print is written on the lower left hand corner of the print itself. The edition is written as a number such as 1/25 or 3/25 read as one of twenty-five or three of twenty-five.

The top number represents the number of the print you are currently working on while the bottom number represents the total number of prints you have made.

Registration Guide - These are marks made on a scrap piece of paper that the artist uses to align his printing block up to his paper the same way every time. By using these marks a printer is able to make a large number of prints that are all aligned and spaced the same.

Printmaking Rubric

- A+ to A- range -** Student will create an original and creative print of an endangered species using a wide variety of design and compositional techniques
- Student will create an interesting and exciting print using correct printmaking techniques
 - Student will have 10 high quality prints, according to the “What is a Good Print” handout given in class
 - Student will have 10 prints on a wide variety of creative materials
 - Student will create an interesting and creative way to display their best print (should include best print, 4-5 collected found images of endangered species, and 5-6 written facts about their endangered species)
 - Student will create a print that is perfectly aligned.
- B+ to B- range -** Student will create an original and creative print of an endangered species using a variety of design and compositional techniques
- Student will create an interesting and exciting print using correct printmaking techniques
 - Student will have 8-10 good quality prints, according to the “What is a Good Print” handout given in class
 - Student will have 8-10 prints on a variety of creative materials
 - Student will create an interesting and creative way to display their best print (should include best print, 2-3 collected found images of endangered species, and 4-5 written facts about their endangered species)
 - Student will create a print that well aligned but may have overlap.
- C+ to C- range -** Student will create an original and creative print of an endangered species using a variety of design and compositional techniques
- Student will create an interesting and exciting print using correct printmaking techniques
 - Student will have 5-7 fair quality prints, according to the “What is a Good Print” handout given in class
 - Student will have 8-10 prints on a variety of creative materials
 - Student will create an interesting and creative way to display their best print (should include best print, 1-2 collected found images of endangered species, and 2-3 written facts about their endangered species)

- Student will create a print that is mostly aligned

D+ and below range - Any student who does less than 5 prints of fair to poor quality, or does not create a way of displaying their print and found images and information will receive a D+ or below depending on the amount and quality of work that is turned in or is completely misaligned

Printmaking Grade Sheet

Student Name: _____

Print # 1-	Effort-	/20		
	Creativity in materials-	/20		
	Creativity in concept-	/20		
	Craftsmanship-	/20		
	Completion-	/20		
			Final-	/100
Print #2-	Effort-	/20		
	Creativity in materials-	/20		
	Creativity in concept-	/20		
	Craftsmanship-	/20		
	Completion-	/20		
			Final-	/100
Print #3-	Effort-	/20		
	Creativity in materials-	/20		
	Creativity in concept-	/20		
	Craftsmanship-	/20		
	Completion-	/20		

Final- /100

Overall- /300