

Linocuts – Exploring Color and Pattern

Instructor: Aijung Kim

Hello Students,

Welcome to Printmaking! For the first class, please bring in some reference images such as drawings, photographs, books, or magazine images of something you'd like to render as a print. We will be creating 2-3 small background patterns, so you may want to bring in ideas for patterns, designs, and color combinations that you like. For examples of linocuts, you may visit my website here: http://aijungkim.com/section/119874_Printmaking.html You can also find lots of images on www.flickr.com – search for “linocut.”

I will be discussing materials on the first day of class – you do not need to buy materials until after the first class. All inks and tools will be provided, and some papers for the first class. As the class progresses, you may need to buy more papers to print with depending on how many prints you want to make. Following this materials list, I've included “Printmaking: Information and Resources” if you wish to familiarize yourself with some of the tools and materials used in printmaking.

Materials List (You do not need to bring these for the first class)

- 100% cotton rag Printmaking Papers (Rives BFK, Stonehenge, Canson Edition, etc) or Asian papers. Stonehenge is a good economical choice that I often use for my prints.
- A pad of drawing paper also will work. Choose acid-free if you care about the longevity of your prints.
- Linoleum plates if you decide you want to carve more. I will be providing 3 unmounted 5” x 7” plates per person, but you can choose whatever size you want. Plaza Art does not stock the 5” x 7” size, so I usually cut them down from a larger-sized plate.
- You may choose to invest in your own set of carving tools – we'll discuss that in the first class. I recommend Power Grip tools as a good-quality brand which will last you a long time, which you can purchase online here: <http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=44106&cat=1%2c130%2c43332%2c43334&ap=1> I recommend the U-shaped gouges and parting (V-shaped) blades – the sizes you want will depend on the level of detail you wish to achieve.

You can find a good selection of papers and art supplies here:

Plaza Art Materials
927 West Grace Street
Richmond, VA 23220-4124
(804) 359-5900

You may contact me with any questions: good_old_fashioned_smell@hotmail.com or by phone (585) 354-5224. You can view my artwork online at www.aijungkim.com.
Looking forward to meeting you!

RELIEF PRINTMAKING: Materials and Resources

PAPERS

Your paper choice can really enhance your finished print. I find it helpful to go to the art store so I can touch the papers and get a better sense of what they're like. Just ask for help or go to the Printmaking Papers section, and you'll find a large variety.

You can proof (do a test print) with inexpensive papers such as cardstock or computer paper before using your "good paper." The papers you use will affect how much ink and pressure to use when printing, but proofing on cheap papers will at least give you an idea of how your image looks and if you still need to work on your plate. Feel free to experiment and don't feel like you have to spend a fortune on paper!

Paper Pads

An inexpensive option for your prints, and easy to work with as you don't have to worry about trimming your paper to size. You can use drawing or sketch pads (sketch is often thinner), kraft paper pads, or pads of colored cardstock/scrapbooking paper.

Linoleum prints will work on almost any kind of paper, smooth or textured depending on the look you're going for. I look for "acid-free, Ph neutral, or archival" papers because I know they will not discolor or become brittle as quickly over time.

Western Printmaking Papers

Western printmaking papers are made in Europe or America. They are thick, strong, and usually have a smooth surface. Most are made with 100% cotton rag, which makes them stronger and more archival/acid-free than regular wood pulp-based papers. These papers are designed especially for intaglio printing, but can be used for all other kinds of printmaking. They are meant to be soaked in water, blotted, and then run through the etching press. Soaking paper allows it to pick up more ink and details from the plate.

Here's a website link that discusses different papers that you may find helpful, though seeing your papers in person is best:

<http://www.1000woodcuts.com/Studionotes/Paper2.html#paper%20index>

Rives BFK

Comes in white, cream, tan. A good all-purpose printmaking paper with a slightly soft texture.

Stonehenge

Comes in many colors as well. This paper is very smooth and is a bit stiffer than BFK. One of the more inexpensive printmaking papers.

Utrecht Drawing and Printmaking Paper

This paper is very similar to Stonehenge and is one of the most inexpensive papers I've used, but has great results from what I've seen. You can only find this paper at Main Art Supply.

Canson Edition

Another pretty good and fairly inexpensive printmaking paper. The only problem I've noticed is sometimes the pulp is not colored evenly, so you might find a few whitish spots when you're using a colored sheet.

Arches 88

This paper is very smooth and tears well. A good all-purpose paper.

Asian Papers

Asian papers are made with long natural plant fibers. Though they are often thin, they are absorbent and extremely strong. They are named for the fibers that are used or the place where they were made. They lend a delicate look, and you can often find them in a wider variety of colors than Western Printmaking papers. I like to use Asian papers for handprinting because their thinness allows for better contact and detail when I am rubbing them with a baren or wooden spoon. They are great for chine colle, a process for adding color to your prints by using cut out shapes of paper. Learn more about the history and uses of Japanese paper:

<http://www.worldprintmakers.com/english/jappaper.htm>

Kitikata

Has a soft, smooth, silky surface.

Masa

Machine made from sulphite pulp. These have a super-smooth side and a textured side.

Yatsuo

I mail-order these papers from New York Central (see resource section). They come in a great variety of colors and are thin, but not too thin. Has a light texture on one side, and is smooth on the other.

Sumi-e Paper

This kind of paper is usually used for brush painting, but is a fairly inexpensive way to get pre-cut paper in pads that you can use for proofs (tests) or final prints. The pads come in different sizes and also in rolls. There is a smooth and a textured side. I found mine at Plaza Art.

CARVING TOOLS

Speedball carries a carving tool with a handle and interchangeable cutter blades that you can store inside the handle. These work fine, but I find that sometimes the blades are not very sharp and/or do not cut well. Speedball also sells individual and packs of blades.

The brand of tools that I personally use are called Power Grip. They are a Japanese brand, and very well-made. Here is a link to an online store that seems to have the best price:

<http://www.leevalley.com/US/wood/page.aspx?p=44106&cat=1,130,43332,43334&ap=1>

You can also buy the tools as a set of 5 or individually. When carving linocuts, I usually just use 3 of the 5 tools that I have, since the other two seem more suited to wood-carving. But you may find them useful even if I have not. From my own experience, I find the V-shaped (Parting) blades and the small and broad U-shaped gouges to be the most helpful. I use just one V-shaped blade, but there are some smaller ones for fine line-work.

WATERBASED/WATERSOLUBLE INKS

I prefer to use water-based inks because they are easier to clean and usually don't give off strong fumes (though certain brands might), or require chemicals to clean up with. Some of these inks are water-based (includes water in the ingredients), water-soluble (dissolves in water), or oil-based but still are able to clean up with soap and water. Look for "block-printing" or "relief ink" when searching for inks to use with linocuts.

Speedball

A student grade ink, though some artists prefer it. Inexpensive and easy to find, it comes in both water-based and oil-based versions. The waterbased inks work fine for relief prints, but sometimes it is hard to get detail and the ink tends to dry up quickly. Prints have a chalky, matte-finish when dry. You can buy an Ink Extender to prolong the drying time.

<http://www.speedballart.com/>

Blick Water-Soluble Block Printing Inks

Similar to Speedball inks, but they don't seem to dry up as fast. Very inexpensive and easy to clean up with water.

www.dickblick.com

Daniel Smith Water-Soluble Ink

Higher quality than the Speedball and Blick brand, but I've noticed it still dries out quickly. You can buy individual tubes or a 6-color set of inks. Doesn't have the same chalky look as Speedball or Blick brands, but takes much longer to dry. There is a modifier called "Miracle Gel" that you can buy from their website that will extend the drying time, but it actually causes the ink to NOT be water-soluble anymore. You could also try using the waterbased Speedball Extender that will also help retard drying time.

www.danielsmith.com

Akua Inks

Akua was acquired by Speedball so they could offer an artist-grade ink. Comes in Akua Intaglio and Akua Color. Akua Intaglio is thicker and works great for printing collagraphs and monotypes. Not recommended for relief printing because the drying time is too long. Akua Color is meant for monotype printing, so it is runny like paint. Note – clean up the ink by applying watered-down soap first. Don't add water right away because the oil in the ink will repel it! Once the soap has broken the ink down, you can use water to wash it away. Prints have a long drying time. Some of my prints never seem to dry completely but treat them as you would a pastel or charcoal drawing – don't rub the surface too much.

<https://www.akuainks.com/>

Caligo Safe-Wash

An oil-based, watersoluble ink that cleans up with soap and water.

www.graphicchemical.com

Graphic Chemical Water-Soluble (W/S) Block Print Inks

An oil-based, watersoluble ink that cleans up with soap and water. This is my preferred ink for linocuts.

www.graphicchemical.com

BAREN

This is a tool used for handprinting. You place your paper over the inked plate and rubbing the paper down in a circular motion, working from the middle and out. Carefully lift the paper to check if you have made good contact, and you should also see the ink starting to come through the paper. You can find a plastic baren or ones made with a bamboo sheath (I prefer these because they seem to be more pressure-sensitive). A wooden spoon will work as well, though it will take longer to handprint a large area because it doesn't have as much surface area to rub with.

BRAYER

For relief printing, I like to use rubber brayers that are soft to medium-soft. The hard acrylic brayers don't work well for relief printing on linoleum. There are different brands to choose from, so use your own judgement. A wide brayer is a good choice for a large printing plate, and shorter brayers are good for working small areas.

LINOLEUM

Speedball or Dick Blick brand works fine. There are some kinds of linoleum or stamp-making materials that are softer which you can experiment with, but I actually like the linoleum which isn't as soft because I can control my line better with a harder carving surface. For our class, we will use unmounted linoleum for press printing and handprinting (it is cheaper than linoleum that has been mounted on a block).

ART SUPPLIERS

In Richmond:

Plaza Art Materials 927 West Grace Street
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 359-5900

Xpedx 2171 Tomlyn Street
Richmond, VA 23230
(804)-354-9795

An office supply store that stocks a large selection of text and cardstock papers.

Online:

www.dickblick.com Has a huge and discounted variety of art supplies. You can find most brands of supplies here. Cheap shipping.

www.danielsmith.com Offers papers, inks, and other art supplies. I think you can only buy the Daniel Smith brand from their website, but I could be wrong. For the collagraph class - you can also buy carborundum here (the grit we'll be using for collagraph prints - I use #180 grit but you can experiment with coarser grits).

www.graphicchemical.com They carry a wide array of items for your printmaking needs.

www.nycentralartssupply.com This is where I order hard-to-find papers. They have a HUGE selection of papers from all over the world. You can request a catalog and paper samples/swatchbooks. You have to pay for the swatchbooks, but it's worth it if you think you will reorder often.

<https://www.akuainks.com/> The website offers a wealth of information for using their products, and they have always been friendly and helpful when I called to ask questions.

ONLINE

www.wetcanvas.com is an invaluable resource for any artist. It is a forum for people to ask questions and offer tips on all kinds of art media, including printmaking. It is free to register.

BOOKS

There are many books out there. Some are aimed for the home printmaker, and others for those who have access to printmaking equipment. Feel free to share any books or resources that you find helpful with the rest of the class.

The Complete Printmaker, by John Ross, Clare Romano, and Tim Ross.

Has a wealth of information on all kinds of printmaking techniques. Mostly black and white photos, with some color artworks. The revised edition was written in 1990, so it doesn't include the innovations in non-toxic printmaking that have come about in the past several years. Still, a great resource.

The Printmaking Bible, by Ann D'Arcy Hughes and Hebe Vernon-Morris

This beautiful tome covers many printmaking techniques and is full of beautiful pictures of contemporary prints. The authors are British, so there are some terms or materials which are unfamiliar to me, but most will have an equivalent or at least a good substitute. This book is inspirational to look at because of the pictures alone!

Collagraph Printmaking, by Mary Ann Wenniger

An older book that I found at the Richmond Main library, but it shows many different effects you can achieve with collagraphs.

Printmaking: A Complete Guide to Materials and Processes, by Beth Grabowski and Bill Fick

A good, comprehensive guide to all kinds of printmaking. Bill Fick used to teach at Pratt Institute where I studied printmaking. He made all kinds of crazy linocuts. I checked out his website and saw this great video of how he carves, inks, and prints a linocut:

<http://billfick.com/2011/02/07/anatomy-of-a-linocut/> (he makes the surface white by painting on a thin layer of gesso – in the comments section he said that it gives more tooth to the surface and helps the india ink to stick.)

Happy Printmaking!