

# Block Printing

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# What is Block printing?

- ▶ Block printing is a technique for printing text, images or patterns used widely throughout East Asia.
- ▶ It originated in China as a method of printing on textiles but eventually became a method for printing on paper.
- ▶ This method was adapted in Japan during the Edo period (1603-1867) and became one of their oldest and most highly developed visual arts.
- ▶ The most common theme in Japan for printmaking describes scenes from everyday life. It narrates the scene and is often packed with figures and detail.

# Materials

- ▶ A level block of wood or a piece of linoleum
- ▶ Drawing utensil
- ▶ Woodcarving tools
- ▶ Ink and Ink Brayer
- ▶ Paper
- ▶ Wooden Spoon



# Step 1: Making Your Image

- ▶ You can draw your image directly onto your matrix, or you can draw your image on paper and then using graphite paper or tracing paper transfer the image onto the matrix.
- ▶ Be aware that since you are in essence “stamping” the image that it will print backwards!
- ▶ So any words you want *MUST* be carved into the block backwards to come out the right way!



# Step 2: Cutting The Block

- ▶ Using your wood carving tools, begin carving away all the negative space in your image
- ▶ The raised areas are the ones that will print!
- ▶ Use caution – these tools are SHARP



# Step 3: Inking the Block

- ▶ Put some ink out on a smooth surface like a pane of glass, and roll the brayer over the ink in several directions until you have the brayer evenly coated in ink, (not dripping in it!)
- ▶ Roll the inked brayer over your carved block, continue rolling with even pressure (not much heavier than the brayer weighs itself)
- ▶ Continue rolling in alternating directions until the block is evenly coated in a thin layer of ink



# Step 4: Printing

- ▶ Take your paper and lay it on top of your freshly inked block
- ▶ Using either a wooden spoon or other smooth surface, begin rubbing the paper into the block
- ▶ The harder you rub the darker/cleaner your image will be.
- ▶ You have your image! Notice that there are chatter marks. These are often used to the artists' advantage to create a sense of movement, but can be removed with some more carving.

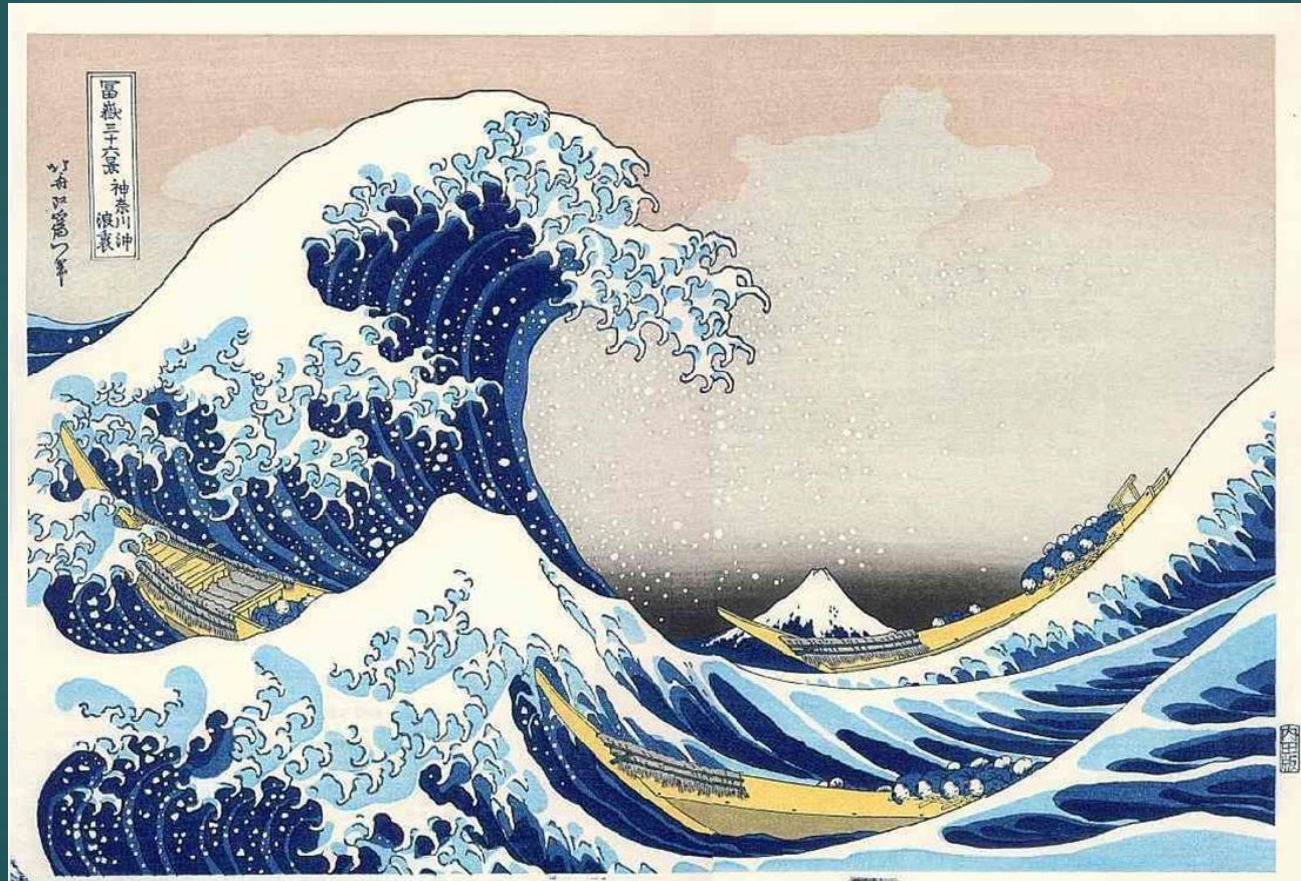




# Some Examples



# Katsushika HOKUSAI, 1831, from the series “36 Views of Mt. Fuji”



This very famous Japanese woodblock print is created using multiple layers for the different colors. Achieving this can be very difficult, as it is easy for the layers to not line up perfectly. Yuan Dynasty, Part of a play, (12061368)



Albrecht Dürer, The Revelation of St John: The Four Riders of the Apocalypse, 1497-98, Woodcut



**Thank You**