

Block Printing Project

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Block printing, among the earliest printmaking techniques, traces its origins to ancient societies like those found in China, India, and Egypt. Below is a concise overview of its historical trajectory. It is thought that block printing originated in China during the Han Dynasty around the 3rd century BCE. Initially, this ancient form of printing was predominantly employed for textile printing purposes in early Chinese society. The introduction of block printing to Europe occurred during the 14th century via trade connections with the East. Initially utilized for textile printing, its usage expanded over time to include paper printing, gaining popularity in both mediums. As industrialization emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, block printing underwent a transformation into mechanized methods like wood engraving and linocut printing. These innovations facilitated swifter and more streamlined production of prints. During the 20th century, block printing underwent a resurgence as a medium for artistic expression. Renowned artists like Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse explored block printing techniques, thus enriching its status as a respected form of fine art. Presently, block printing persists as both a traditional craft and a contemporary art form, serving diverse purposes such as textile design, printmaking, and fine art creation.

Materials used for Block Printing:

Two yards of cotton fabric split in half (1 yard each)

Speedball paint (6 pack)

1 main motif (Flower)

1 Complimentary motif (Leaf)

Paint brayer

2 Linoleum blocks

Scissors

Measuring Tape

Pencil

Carver for block

Paintbrush for background design

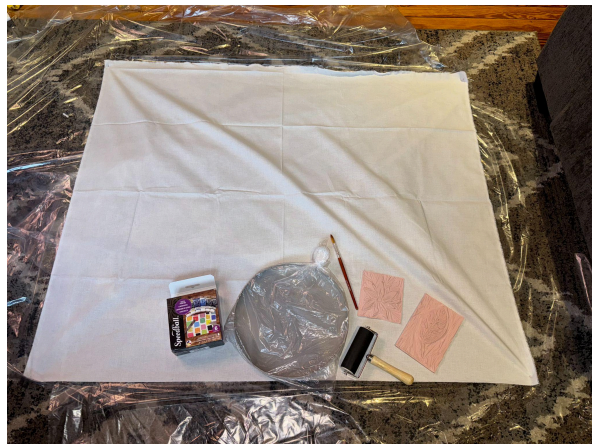
Two plates covered in plastic to put paint on

Step-by-Step Process:

1. Design and Transfer: Begin by sketching your flower and leaf motifs on separate pieces of paper. Once satisfied with the designs, transfer them onto the linoleum blocks using transfer paper or by tracing directly onto the blocks.
2. Carving the Blocks: Use linoleum carving tools to carefully carve out the designs of a flower and a leaf on their respective blocks. Remember to carve away the areas you don't want to print, leaving the raised areas that will receive the ink.



3. Prepare Fabric: Cut the two yards of cotton fabric into halves, giving you four equal-sized pieces. Wash and iron the fabric to ensure it's clean and smooth, ready for printing.



4. Prepare Paint and Brayer: Pour the Speedball paint onto separate plates, one for each color. Use the paint brayer to evenly spread the paint on the linoleum blocks, ensuring full coverage of the carved designs.



5. Printing the First Yard of Fabric:
- Place the first fabric piece on a flat surface, securing it in place with pins. (I used my floor with my rug and laid down plastic garbage bags underneath).
 - Ink the flower linoleum block with red paint and press it firmly onto the fabric, repeating the pattern in a straight repeat across the fabric.
 - Clean the flower block and switch to grey paint for the leaf linoleum block. Print the leaf motif outward from the flower motifs, creating a repeating pattern in fours.
6. Background Design:
- Dip a paintbrush into yellow paint and flick it onto the fabric to create a background design. This adds texture and interest to the overall piece.

7. Printing the Second Yard of Fabric:

- Repeat the printing process with the second yard of fabric, using blue paint for the flower motif and gold paint for the leaf motif. Ensure the same straight repeat pattern is maintained.



8. Background Design for Second Yard:

- Using a different color palette, now with purple paint, repeat the background design process by flicking paint onto the fabric with a paintbrush.

9. Drying and Finishing:

- Allow both pieces of fabric to dry thoroughly before handling or laundering.
- Once fully dry and set, your block printing project featuring the flower and leaf motifs with a straight repeat pattern is complete and ready for use in various textile applications.

First Yard of Fabirc: Red, Grey, Yellow



Second Yard of Fabric: Blue, Gold, Purple



Creating this block printing project featuring a flower and leaf motif was a fascinating journey into the world of color theory and design. Throughout the process, I encountered various terms and concepts that boosted my understanding of color relationships and printing techniques. Exploring hues, tints, shades, saturation, and value became essential as I selected colors for the project. Utilizing analogous colors, those adjacent to the color wheel, for the flower and leaf motifs created a harmonious and visually pleasing effect. This choice allowed for subtle variations in color while maintaining a cohesive and unified look. In contrast, incorporating complementary colors, those opposite on the color wheel, heightened the vibrancy and contrast within the design. This strategic use of color generated interest and balance, especially when using the split complementary color scheme for the background, enhancing the overall visual impact. The concept of a straight repeat pattern guided the arrangement of the motifs across the fabric, ensuring consistency and rhythm in the design. This repetitive arrangement created a sense of continuity and flow, enhancing the project's aesthetic appeal. Overall, the experience of completing this block printing project was educational, rewarding, and fun. It provided an opportunity to experiment with color, design, and printing techniques while gaining insight into the intricacies of creating visually compelling textile art.