

Guide to Block-Printing Linocut

Block-printing is a type of printmaking where the artist cuts away pieces from the surface of a block to create a printable design.

Lino Block is a soft piece of linoleum that is cut to create a blockprint.

Linocuts are a simple black/white printing style. Areas of the soft plate are removed with cutting tools (Exacto-knife, gouge) so that the remaining surface can be inked to create an image.

Materials:

- LINO HANDLE/CUTTER SET
- Block printing blocks
- Block printing inks – available in water base - crimson, black, leaf green, violet, blue, burnt sienna, bright red, orange, yellow, white. I would recommend various colours for multi-coloured printing. You may wish to purchase a fixative to spray prints to fix the water-based ink (Krylon Workable Fixative is a good choice).
- Bayer or Roller- for applying ink to the block. Available in several sizes (I would recommend 6"). If several rollers are purchased they can be used for specific colours. Also available at Brennan.
- Rice Paper- I recommend Mulberry paper on the roll; available at most art stores (it is strong enough and thin enough to be used with a wooden spoon).

Preparation:

You will need to have all of your tools on hand before starting this project.

- have your students trace their plate onto several pieces of paper. These 'templates' will be used to design their plate.
- working with a thick marker students, can create their designs (the thick line will help the student keep the design simple and also allow for plate integrity - enough line to support the roller and transfer well to the paper).
- it is important to carefully plan the image to cut into the plate.
- the use of simple shapes and forms, thick lines and consideration of the two colours in the print (colour and white of page) are very important.

Activity: Part 1 Creating a Design (This is the most important part of the process)

Students create a design- Each student will be asked to write down five things they like

- Students must pick one of these things to create a blockprint about- they can represent it literally or abstractly. They should make a quick list of ways they can visually represent their choice. For example- I like music, design could include notes, musical staff, abstract line that represents a melody. PLEASE DO NOT LET YOUR STUDENTS USE TEXT, ONLY SYMBOLS OR IMAGES.
- Working on a larger piece of paper students should quickly draw some images they can use in their design.

- Students will create 4 identical spaces representing the size of a block (they can even trace their block 4 times).
- Working in the space they will create four different line based drawing using their initial sketch.
- Students will pick one of these designs to create a block-print. Please remind them that a **simple design is more effective**.

After creating a paper design the same size as the plate, use a black marker to fill in the black part of the pattern (this is everything that will coated with ink, not cut away from the block).

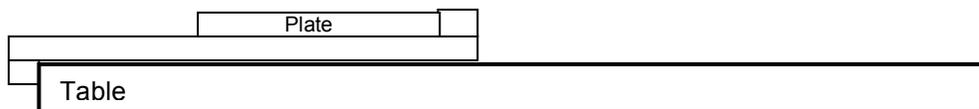


- now the pattern needs to be mirrored to create the image (the print will come off the plate as a mirror of the applied pattern). A simple trick is to use the black marker on thin paper, then flip it over and fill in the image using the shadow of the marker through the paper.

- to transfer the pattern onto the lino use a soft pencil or graphite to transfer the image - rub the 'back' (remember this was originally the front) of the pattern with a thick coat of the graphite. Tape the pattern with the graphite face down onto the lino plate. Now use a pen and trace over the edges of your pattern, this will leave a graphite line on the plate to work from.

- start by cutting along side the edge of the image on the plate with an exacto knife or the edge of your exacto gouge. When using the gouge always cut away from yourself. Push pins in a board can be used to hold the plate in place or a board with a wooden edge to brace the plate against.

- cutting board (these can be simply made with a small piece of plywood approximately 12" x 16")- a strip of wood is run on the bottom of one edge and then another strip on the top of the opposite side, this gives students something to brace their plate on - the bottom edge is placed against the side of a desk or table, the plate is put against the upper edge.



Inking Up the Image:

1. Inking the plate. The inks are applied to the plate using a 'Brayer'- a small hard rubber roller.
2. Light weight paper, such as rice paper can be used with lino plates - when using soft paper the image can be lifted by rubbing the back of the print with a wooden spoon.
3. After the prints are dry they are signed and numbered by the artist.