PRINTMAKING – WOODCUT DESIGN

Woodcut and wood engraving, prints are made from designs cut in relief on wood (subtractive process), in contrast to copper or steel engraving and etching (which are intaglio).

Woodcuts are relief prints. The design is drawn on the surface of a wooden block or plank. The areas that are to be blank are cut away, leaving raised the design that is to be printed. Ink is then rolled or daubed over the raised area. A sheet of paper is placed on top of the block and pressed against it, either in a press or by hand. This pressure transfers the ink to the paper.

Since the print is the mirror image of the design on the block, the image must be conceived in reverse. A rubber stamp is a common example of a relief printing process. Woodcutting, the oldest method of printmaking, is accomplished using soft wood with a knife employed along the grain.

STEP ONE: Decide on one of the following choices for your woodcut design:

- Poster Advertisement (Upcoming Performance)
- Portrait: Human or Animal
- Landscape (Look at reverse for art history of woodcuts)

STEP TWO: Begin by making a series of at least 3 conceptual sketches in your sketchbook on your chosen theme. CONSIDER: Positive/negative space, contrast, line and overall composition.

STEP THREE: Drawing the reverse outline of your subject matter on the flat top of the piece of wood. REMEMBER: to draw the outline of any text backwards as the print will print front wards. Carefully consider how you design your positive/negative space.

STEP FOUR: Next begin by carving out around the sections you have defined – these will be your blank sections which will not be filled with ink when pressed. The outline will appear as you cut away the sections around your subject matter. Consider a variety of texture and detail in your wood cutting technique. Always carve away from your body.

STEP FIVE: Once you have finished carving your woodblock using a roller dipped in ink roll across the surface of block to create a mono or test print.

STEP SIX: REFLECT: Answer the following questions using the elements and principles of design and hand them in with your completed drawing for evaluation.

1. What part of your finished project did you find most successful and why?
2. What part of your finished project did you find least successful and why?
3. If you had to do this project, what part would you change or improve on and why?
Woodcut Examples

Albrecht Durer
The Rhinoceros
1515
Woodcut
British Museum, London

From a drawing (British Museum, London) and its inscription it is clear that Dürer himself had never seen such an animal, but had drawn it after seeing a sketch and after descriptions in a letter from Lisbon. This creature which was previously unknown in modern Europe was presented by King Emanuel to the Pope, but the animal perished during transport owing to shipwreck.

Frank Romero
2004.

Japanese Woodcut

Katsushika Hokusai
(Japanese, 1760-1849)
South Wind, Clearing Skies, from the series Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji, ca. 1829-33
color woodblock print
10 1/16 x 14 7/8 in.
(25.5 x 38 cm)

Poster Design
A Brief History of Woodcuts...

Woodcuts were used in ancient Egypt and Babylonia for impressing intaglio designs into unpressed bricks and by the Romans for stamping letters and symbols. The Chinese used wood blocks for stamping patterns on textiles and for illustrating books. Woodcuts appeared in Europe at the beginning of the 15th cent., when they were used to make religious pictures for distribution to pilgrims, on playing cards and simple prints, and for the block book which preceded printing. At that time the artist and the artisan were one, the same person designing the cut and carving the block. One of the first dated European woodcuts is a St. Christopher of 1423.

After the invention of the printing press, woodcuts, being inked in the same way as type, lent themselves admirably to book illustration. The first Roman book with woodcuts appeared in 1467, but Venice became the center of Italian wood engraving. In the 16th cent. in France woodcuts frequently served to illustrate books of hours. The actual cutting was often performed by a specialist rather than by the designer.

In Germany, where the form was particularly well developed, Dürer was one of the most eminent woodcut designers of the Renaissance.

As photographic technology advanced, photography and photographic processes slowly replaced woodcut as a means of book illustration and wood engraving for reproduction of oil paintings. In the 1890s in France a revival of woodcutting to produce original prints was initiated by Paul Gauguin, Edvard Munch, and Felix Vallotton, who cut their blocks themselves. Their influence on 20th-century expression in this medium was enormous. Derain, Dufy, and Maillol also made notable woodcuts.

After World War II many artists in the United States, such as Leonard Baskin, Sue Fuller, and Seong Moy, explored new formal and technical possibilities in the medium of woodcutting.
Print Making Woodcut Design Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge/Understanding</th>
<th>Level 0</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates understanding of the elements &amp; principles of design in the woodcut (e.g., line, space, contrast, shape)</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited understanding of the elements &amp; principles of design in the sculpture. 0.25</td>
<td>Some understanding of the elements &amp; principles of design in the sculpture. 0.50</td>
<td>Student demonstrates considerable understanding of the elements &amp; principles of design in the sculpture. 1</td>
<td>Student demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the elements &amp; principles of design in the sculpture. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking/Inquiry: Concept: Woodcut Design</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Concept and context is slightly unclear and/or weak. Meaning or ideas conveyed are not on par with student grade level. 0.25</td>
<td>Concept and context is clear and valid. Meaning or ideas conveyed are above expectations for student's grade level. 0.50</td>
<td>Concept and context is clear and valid. Meaning or ideas conveyed are above expectations for student's grade level. 1</td>
<td>Concept and context is clear and strong. Meaning or ideas conveyed are above expectations for student's grade level. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication: Clarity of chosen theme</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Student's work demonstrates theme with limited clarity. 0.25</td>
<td>Student's work demonstrates theme with some clarity. 0.50</td>
<td>Student's work demonstrates theme with considerable clarity. 0.75</td>
<td>Student's work demonstrates theme with a high degree of clarity. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Questions</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Poor, yes/no answers/limited incompleteness. 0.25</td>
<td>Somewhat coherent and somewhat complete. 0.50</td>
<td>Clear and substantial answers. 0.75</td>
<td>Superior and insightful answers. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application: Creative Process: Ability to solve a series of artistic problems, showing an awareness of formal qualities, visual conventions, and relevant ideas and concepts. Preliminary Sketches (3)</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Preliminary sketches are poor/incomplete. Concepts are poor/incomplete. Planning is tentative or non-existent. (0.5) 0.5</td>
<td>Preliminary sketches are somewhat complete. Concepts are somewhat complete. Planning is somewhat substantial &amp; shows some alternative ideas. (1-2) 1</td>
<td>Preliminary sketches are mostly complete. Concepts are complete. Planning is evident &amp; shows some divergent thinking. (2-3) 1.75</td>
<td>Preliminary sketches are thorough and complete. Concepts are fully developed. Planning is exceptional &amp; shows considerable flexibility in thinking. (3+) 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Process: Demonstration of Skill Development &amp; following procedures including Clean Up</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 5-6</td>
<td>Student demonstrates some effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 7-8</td>
<td>Student demonstrates considerable effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 10</td>
<td>Student demonstrates superior effectiveness in demonstrating the creative process and following procedures. 10-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses elements &amp; principles of design &amp; print making techniques to produce an effective artwork</td>
<td>Work does not meet assignments expectations for this category. Incomplete. 0</td>
<td>Student demonstrates limited use of the e &amp; ps of design and print making techniques to produce an art work of limited effectiveness. 1</td>
<td>Student demonstrates some use of the e &amp; ps of design and print making techniques to produce an art work of some effectiveness. 2-3</td>
<td>Student demonstrates considerable use of the e &amp; ps of print making techniques to produce an effective art work of considerable effectiveness. 3-4</td>
<td>Student demonstrates considerable use of the e &amp; ps of design and print making techniques to produce a highly effective art work. 5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

A1. The Creative Process: apply the creative process to create a variety of artworks, individually and/or collaboratively; A1.1 use various strategies, individually and/or collaboratively, to generate, explore, and elaborate on ideas and to develop and revise detailed plans for the creation of art works that address a variety of creative challenges (e.g., use brainstorming, concept webs, and/or groups discussions to formulate original ideas for thematic works and/or works of personal expression; use research and discussions with a partner to explore and elaborate on ideas; use diagrams, notes, and/or outlines to help them formulate detailed plans for the art work; revise their plans on the basis of reflection.) A1.2 apply the appropriate stages of the creative process to produce and revise two- and three-dimensional art works using a variety of traditional and contemporary media (e.g., explore, experiment with, and refine their use of a variety of media; choose a medium/media appropriate for their planned art work; reflect on the effectiveness of preliminary versions of their work; revise their art work on the basis of reflection and useful feedback.)

A2. The Elements and Principles of Design: apply the elements and principles of design to create art works for the purpose of self-expression and to communicate ideas, information, and/or messages; A2.1 explore how elements and principle of design can be used to convey emotion and enhance personal expression, and use a combination of these elements and principles to create two- and three-dimensional art works that express personal feelings and communicate specific emotions to an audience (e.g., explore how variations in line, value, form, proportion, and emphasis can be used to convey various emotions; adapt their findings to enhance expression in their art work) A3. Production and Presentation: produce art works, using a variety of media/materials and traditional and emerging technologies, tools, and techniques, and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of ways of presenting their works and the works of others.
A3.2 explore a range of traditional and current materials, technologies, techniques, and tools used by visual artists (e.g., Claude Monet’s use of optical colour mixing; Andy Warhol’s use of silkscreens; George Segal’s use of plaster bandage; Jean-Paul Riopelle’s use of a palette knife for impasto application of paint; Daphne Odjig’s use of interconnecting black lines), and adapt and apply them to create original art works

B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various art works;
B1.1 analyse their initial response to art works (e.g., describe their initial reaction to an art work and determine which specific aspects of the work and their personal experience led to their reaction)
B1.2 deconstruct the visual content and the use of elements and principles of design in their own art work and the work of others (e.g., identify individual elements and principles and aspects of the visual content in an art work, interpret their function, and analyse how the artist has manipulated them to create impact, emphasis, mood, movement, and meaning; compare The Abduction of the Daughters of Leucippus by Peter Paul Rubens to the cover of a contemporary comic book about an action hero, with reference to the artists’ use of colour, line, shape, value, balance, and emphasis)
B1.3 explain, with reference to particular works, both historical and contemporary (e.g., J. M. W. Turner’s Rain, Steam, and Speed: The Great Western Railway; Maya Lin’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial), how knowledge of an art work’s cultural and historical context, achieved through research, has clarified and enriched their understanding of the work’s intent and meaning
B1.4 describe and reflect on the qualities of their own art works and the works of others, and evaluate the effectiveness of these works, using a variety of criteria (e.g., the works’ ability to convey a message or emotion; their technical merit; their stylistic qualities; the use of technique and successful manipulation of media/materials; the connection between form and message)

B2. Art, Society, and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the societies in which they were created, and how they can affect both social and personal values;
B2.3 reflect on and explain how creating and analysing art works has affected their personal identity and values and/or changed their perceptions of society and social issues (e.g., with reference to their emotional awareness and their ability to express themselves; their awareness of stereotypes; their understanding of the meaning of objects and symbols associated with a variety of cultural groups; their awareness of and relationship to their physical environment; their position on social issues such as censorship, discrimination, inequality)

C1. Terminology: demonstrate an understanding of, and use correct terminology when referring to, elements, principles, and other components related to visual arts;
C1.1 demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of design, and use terminology related to these elements and principles correctly and appropriately when creating or analysing art works (e.g., when describing how they have used elements and principles in a sculpture to convey a sense of movement)
C1.2 explain terminology related to a variety of techniques, materials, and tools (e.g., additive and subtractive techniques, blazing, gesso, intaglio, layering, palette knife, scumbling, transfers, single-lens reflex [SLR] cameras, software used to edit digital photographs), and use this terminology correctly and appropriately when creating, analysing, and/or presenting art works
C1.3 using appropriate terminology, explain the creative process and describe in detail the critical analysis process, with particular reference to the role of deconstruction in the latter process

C2. Conventions and Techniques: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and techniques used in the creation of visual art works;
C2.1 demonstrate an understanding of a wide variety of techniques that artists use to achieve a range of specific effects (e.g., techniques used to create the illusion of depth and perspective and to create texture on different surfaces; the use of additive and subtractive sculpture, layering, positive and negative space, and relief to create effects)
C2.2 demonstrate an understanding of a variety of conventions used in visual arts (e.g., allegory, expressive exaggeration, juxtaposition, synectics; conventions associated with heroic, narrative, naturalistic, propaganda, realistic, and satirical art), and explain how they are used in different types of art works

C3. Responsible Practices: demonstrate an understanding of responsible practices in visual arts.
C3.2 demonstrate an understanding of health and safety issues and conscientious practices associated with the use of materials, property, techniques, tools, and technologies in visual arts (e.g., the appropriate use of aerosol products, utility knives, printing presses, electrical tools, computers; an awareness of appropriate precautions to take when exposed to physical and chemical hazards), and apply these practices when creating and/or presenting art works