



# Smithsonian Associates

## **Relief Printing**

**Instructor: Max Karl Winkler**

In a typical class, the aim of the Relief Printmaking course is to produce a black-and-white linocut, and a two-color woodcut. Because the summer quarter is shorter than others, the goal in this term is to produce a two-color print, either linocut or woodcut. The materials, procedures, and skills are the same for both approaches: the students will, at the end of the class, be prepared to produce relief prints independently, with a minimal investment.

Students who have never worked with linocut or woodcut should buy most of their materials during the week following the first class meeting, so that they can benefit from an introduction to the materials and a discussion of the options available. The first session will include both an introduction to the materials and techniques of relief printmaking, and the beginning of planning the picture.

1. For the first class meeting, prepare a 6 x 8-inch sketch or drawing of the design for your print.

2(a). If you want to produce a linocut, you should also purchase two 6 x 8-inch mounted linoleum blocks. (Note that linoleum is sold in several forms. You should buy tan linoleum rather than “battleship” grey, because the tan linoleum is of finer texture; and you should buy linoleum mounted on particle-board blocks, rather than linoleum sold in thin sheets backed with burlap. By all means, avoid alternative surfaces like “soft-cut” rubberized plastic, which has the texture of an eraser, or clear PVC blocks.) The linoleum blocks cost about \$5.00 each.

2(b). If woodcut is your preference, you can purchase wood from a lumber yard and prepare it for carving; or you can order a prepared plank-grain maple block from Graphic Chemical and Ink ([www.graphicchemical.com](http://www.graphicchemical.com)) or Art Boards ([www.art-boards.com](http://www.art-boards.com)). These blocks cost about \$20.00 each. For a two-color woodcut print, only one block is needed, because both sides of the block can be carved.

2(c). You need not be constrained by the 6 x 8-inch size. If you prefer to make a small greeting-card print, or a larger print, feel free to purchase your block(s) accordingly. Whether you work large or small, the process remains the same.

3. Ultimately, these are to be provided by each student, and will be discussed at the first session:

- Linoleum block, mounted, in your preferred size (or a plank-grain woodcut block—of cherry, maple, walnut, or other hardwood)

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- Carving tools: knife, C-gouge, U-gouge, veiner
- Carbon paper, transfer paper, or xylene blender, for transferring designs to the block
- Two (or more) sheets of printmaking paper (Rives Lightweight, BFK Rives Heavyweight, Revere Silk, Stonehenge, Hosho, Kitakata, or other), and inexpensive paper for proofing
- Brayer
- Wooden spoon (and, if you wish, a baren)
- Block printing ink, oil base, 1.25 oz tube, black and color (the color to be determined by your design and your taste)
- Cardboard and white all-purpose glue, for making a printing frame

These materials are minimum. Since individuals work at different rates, toward different ends, and within different budgets, it is difficult to arrive at a maximum number for some of the supplies. These matters, too, will be discussed at the first class meeting.

Because printmaking can be a messy undertaking, be sure to wear old clothes for your work, or wear a smock or overshirt. To preserve clean hands, you might wish to purchase rubber or vinyl gloves to wear during cleanup. If you have questions about the materials or any other aspect of the course, please call Max-Karl at home (301:949.8612) or e-mail at [maxkarlwinkler@verizon.net](mailto:maxkarlwinkler@verizon.net).

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