



# Smithsonian Associates

## **Gyotaku Hawaiian Style**

**Instructor: Sue Fierston**

Print your fish Hawaiian style in this advanced Gyotaku workshop: over the three-hour class I'll demonstrate the gyotaku inking and printing processes using both Akua printing inks and acrylic paint. Next, you will make several colorful gyotaku on your own. Along the way, I can help you troubleshoot your prints, choose papers, and learn how to embellish a black and white print you made in the beginning workshop. [sue.fierston@gmail.com](mailto:sue.fierston@gmail.com)

### **MATERIALS**

**From an Asian market, Whole Foods, Wegman's or any store that sells very fresh whole fish:**

A whole fish weighing between 1 and 2 lbs. including tail, all fins, all scales. Don't let the fish merchant gut the fish, simply buy it whole one or two days ahead of class, bring it home, and keep it cold in the back of the refrigerator.

**Art supplies to purchase, available online at [Dickblick.com](http://Dickblick.com), [Jerrysartarama.com](http://Jerrysartarama.com) or locally at Plaza Art**

3 watercolor round paintbrushes sizes 10 or 12, or 3/4 to 1 inch flat brushes, can be old or inexpensive

### **OR**

3 1 inch trim paint brushes from the hardware store

1 pad Aitoh brand sumi-e calligraphy paper, 12 x 18 or larger, 50 sheets.

You will use between 5 and 10 sheets of this paper, so feel free to share a pad if it is logistically possible. It makes beautiful, lasting prints. Yasumoto brand is easier to find, but the paper is not as good for our purposes. Plaza Art, our great local art supplier, carries the 12 x 18 inch pads which can be hard to find. Here's the link:

<https://www.plazaart.com/sumi-e-painting-and-calligraphy-paper-sketch-pad-12x18>

3 Akua Intaglio printing ink, 2 oz: 1 each of Magenta, Pthalo blue, Dairylide yellow

3 Plastic knives, popsicle sticks, or palette knives to mix and dispense ink. I have used short sticks from a tree in an emergency!

6 Caran d'Ache watercolor crayons: Yellow, Purple, Olive, Ochre, Prussian Blue, White

These colors match the Akua ink exactly, and they help to bring out definition in the print. If you have similar colors, give them a try.

**FACEBOOK: SMITHSONIAN STUDIO ARTS INSTAGRAM: @SMITHSONIANASSOCIATES**

**EMAIL: [ASSOCIATES-STUDIOARTS@SI.EDU](mailto:ASSOCIATES-STUDIOARTS@SI.EDU)**

- 1 Spray bottle for misting printing paper with water. I use Holbein's 2 oz. atomizer **OR** Flairosol Olive Oil Mister
- 1 White paper plate **OR** 8 x 11 inch piece of freezer paper to use as your ink palette

### **Optional supplies**

- 1 sheet unryu paper, 24 x 39 inches. You can fold or cut it smaller, depending on the size of your fish. You would use this to print a larger composition, say a school of fish swimming past.
- An old, white, pillowcase or piece of white muslin measuring 12 x 18 inches
- 1 watercolor paintbrush size 0 or 1 for painting in the fish eye on the print
- 3 1 oz. bottles of Golden acrylic paint: Quinacridone Magenta, Pthalo Blue, Hansa Yellow, for printing with acrylics
- 1 1 oz. bottle Golden Interference Gold (fine)
- 1 4 oz. jar Golden Pearl Mica Flake (small)

### **You likely have at home**

- Pencil
- Paper towels
- Salt and dish soap to wash the fish
- Newspaper or an old tablecloth to cover your work-table
- A trash bag

### **Hi everyone! Prepare your fish for printing in these five steps:**

1. The day before class, purchase a whole, ungutted, unscaled, head-on fish weighing between 1 and 3 pounds. If you can choose the fish yourself, look for whole, untattered fins and a fish body that is sleek and unblemished. Fish merchants may look at you as if you're crazy but tell them that you're making art! Store the fish in the coldest part of your refrigerator overnight.
2. The next morning, lay out newspaper or newsprint in a spot next to the place you will be printing.
3. A few hours before class, unwrap your fish and wash it gently in the kitchen sink using your hands, not the sprayer. If you want to wear gloves, go ahead. You may find there is a quiet magic in peacefully rinsing your

fish under cool water and getting to know the shape of its fins and the color of its scales. Many fish have spines in their dorsal fins. For this reason, take care as you wash the fins.

4. You can use a few drops of Dawn dish soap, a sprinkling of baking soda, or a sprinkling of salt to help you remove the slime from the body of the fish. Your aim is to remove all slime so the printing ink will stick to the fish.

5. Transfer the clean fish to the newspaper. Leave it out to dry, uncovered, until class begins. The fish will come to room temperature in this time, and the combination of dry, clean skin and a room-temperature fish will help you make the best prints.

Please plan to keep your Zoom camera on for the first hour of class when I will be demonstrating and taking your questions. Next, we will spend the next hour to hour and a half practicing, and I will keep my camera on and be ready for your individual questions.

For the last 30 min of the workshop, we will have a class gallery of work and collect class advice for making more prints at home, including how to print on fabric.

Looking forward to meeting you!



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