

Designed with our younger audience in mind, yet fun and fascinating for all ages, this exhibition goes on a colorful, atmospheric exploration through Japan to show how popular stories have shaped the country's art, design, and technology across the centuries. Divided into four thematic sections—Sky, Sea, Forest, and City—it presents over one hundred and fifty historic and contemporary objects, ranging from animated movies, origami, and ukiyo-e woodblock prints to Daruma dolls, robots, and youth fashion.

Created by the V&A – Touring the World



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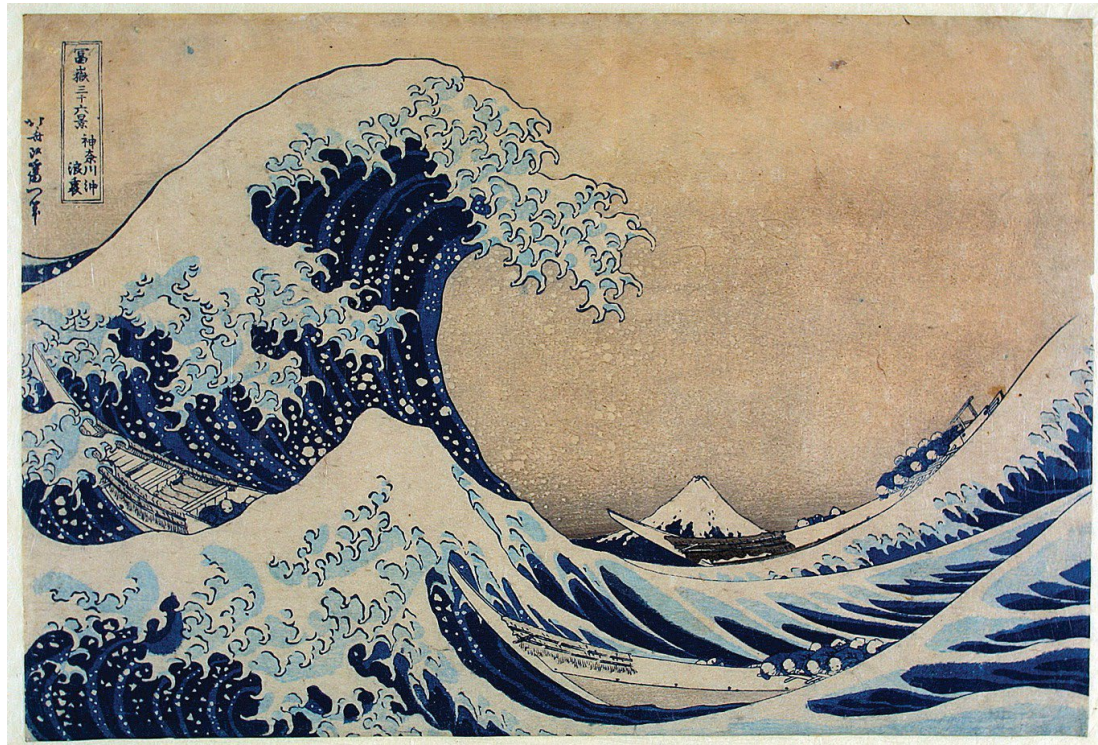
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Katsushika Hokusai. *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, from the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*, ca. 1831. Woodblock print; 9 3/4 x 14 1/2 in. V&A: Given by the Misses Alexander, E.4823-1916. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Japan has over fourteen thousand islands surrounded by deep seas. Below these waters sit active volcanoes and colliding tectonic plates that can churn the seas into giant, destructive waves.

The sea is packed with food, shells and natural treasures, but it also has many dangers. Its secrets spark stories in peoples' imaginations. In Japan, epic tales set both above and below the waves are woven into myths and legends.

You can see how important the sea is to Japan through its starring role in famous works of art like Hokusai's *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* and films like Studio Ghibli's *Ponyo*.

Under the Wave off Kanagawa

Three boats are rocked about in the stormy sea. Dwarfed in the curve of the wave is Mount Fuji, Japan's tallest mountain. An active volcano, Mount Fuji is considered sacred.

Katsushika Hokusai was a world-renowned painter and printmaker in nineteenth-century Japan best known for his series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji*. *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* is one of the most recognized prints of the series.

Printmaking processes such as woodcut, lithography, screen printing, and etching are based on the transfer of an image from a matrix or original image onto paper or another surface. For woodblock printing, the matrix is carved into wood, and new prints are created by inking the matrix and pressing it onto a surface. This gives the artist the ability to make several prints of the same image.

Questions

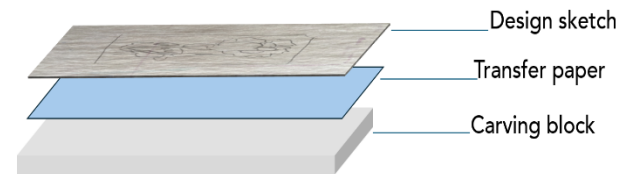
- Hokusai was inspired by Mount Fuji. What natural landmarks or objects in nature do you find inspiring?
- In Japanese culture, there are myths and stories based on the sea. Do you know of any stories based on settings or natural landmarks in your area?
- How is printmaking different from a one-of-a-kind work of art such as a painting or sculpture?

Katsushika Hokusai: Block Printing

Teens & Adults



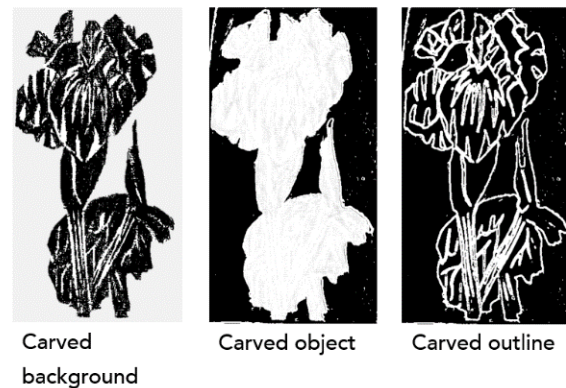
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Objective

Participants will design, carve, and print an image inspired by nature or natural occurrences in their environments.

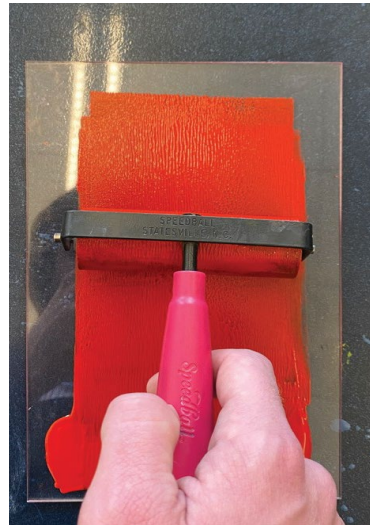
Materials

- Block printing paper
- Block printing ink
- Transfer paper
- Baren
- Brayer
- Permanent marker
- Carving tools
- Pencil
- Carving Block
- Watercolor set
- Paintbrush
- Water cup
- Acrylic sheet
- Drawing paper
- Palette knife

Steps

1. Begin by thinking of objects in nature that you want to depict in your print. Consider things like flowers, trees, hills, mountains, valleys, etc., and sketch your design on a piece of drawing paper.
2. Once the design is complete, transfer it to your carving block by placing a piece of transfer paper on your block, placing your sketch on top of the transfer paper, and drawing over the lines of your sketch with a pencil.
3. On the block, trace over the transferred design with a permanent marker to darken the lines.
4. Once transferred and traced, the design is ready for carving. Decide whether you want to carve the background around the object, carve away the object itself, or carve the outline of the object.
5. Choose the appropriate cutting tools to carve the design out. Use wide tools for carving out large, deep areas or narrow tools for fine marks.
6. Once the design is carved, use a pallet knife to apply a slab of ink to the upper portion of an acrylic sheet.

Katsushika Hokusai: Block Printing Teens & Adults



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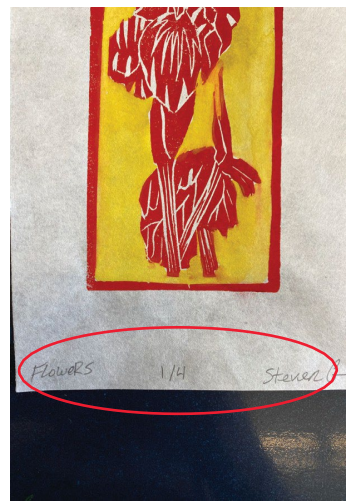
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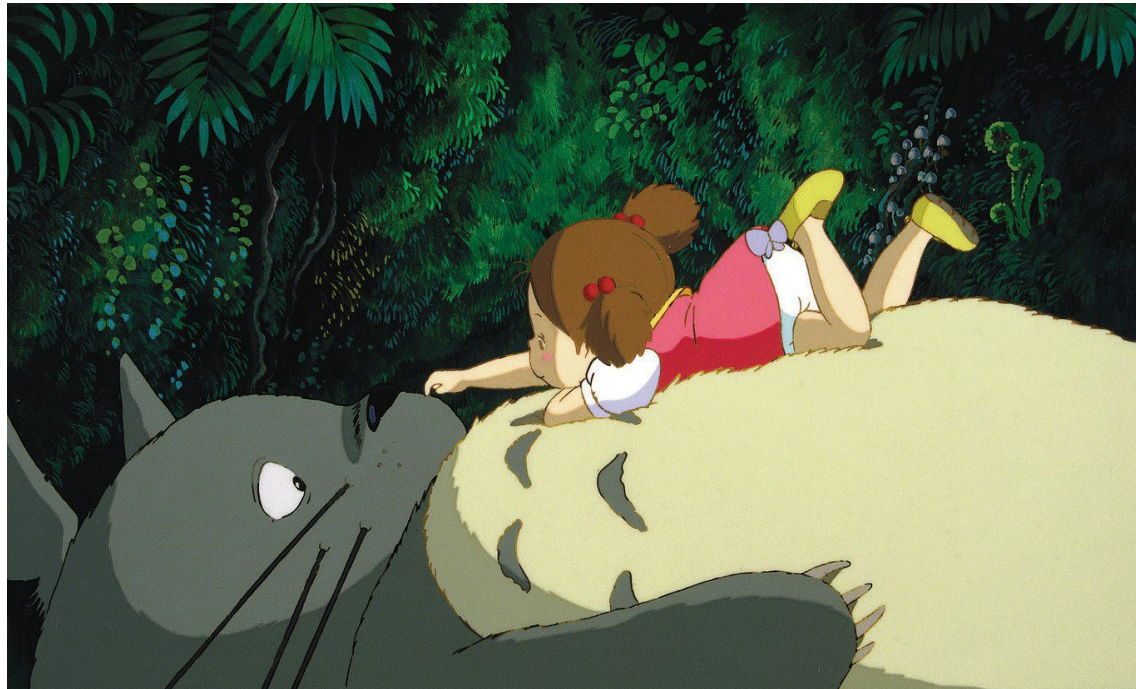


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7. Roll your brayer over the ink, spreading it across the acrylic sheet until the brayer is covered with ink.
8. Use the inked brayer to roll the ink onto the block evenly.
9. Carefully place a sheet of block printing paper face down onto the block. Use a baren to press the paper against the block, then slowly pull the paper away from the block to reveal a finished print.
10. After completing the print, you may use watercolor paints to add color, starting lightly and building up layers of opacity.
11. Once you complete the watercolor step for each print, place your prints in a designated area to dry.
12. At the bottom of your prints, use a pencil to sign the title of your work, the number of the edition and your name. If you make 5 prints, the first print of the edition will be labeled "1/5," second print "2/5," etc.



Studio Ghibli, directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Still from *My Neighbor Totoro*, 1988. © 1988 Studio Ghibli

Much of Japan is covered by trees. Its ancient forests have long been a place where people can find peace and quiet. Out of these woods come tales of mystery and enchantment. As a home to woodland animals, the forests have inspired mythical stories of shapeshifting creatures, like tanuki raccoon dogs and kitsune foxes, and heroes with superhuman qualities, like Momotarō and Princess Kaguya. These stories reflect our complicated relationship with wildlife and emphasize the need to live in harmony with nature. Japanese art, design, and film continue to draw on the magic of the forest and highlight its many wonders.

My Neighbor Totoro

In the film *My Neighbor Totoro*, the young sisters Mei and Satsuki move from the city to the countryside. Here they become friends with Totoro, a giant, friendly forest spirit.

Born in Tokyo in 1941, Hayao Miyazaki is a founder of Studio Ghibli and the director of *My Neighbor Totoro*. He started his career as a manga and animation artist. Part of his process for creating an animated film is creating a storyboard.

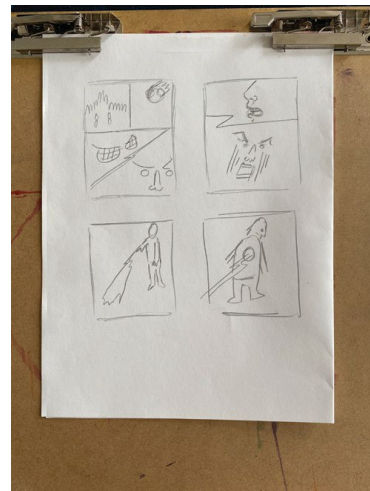
A storyboard is a series of rough sketches used to plan the visual details of animated scenes. Miyazaki and others use ink and watercolor to make their storyboards.

Questions

- What are some myths and legends associated with your local or regional community?
- How do mythical stories help people make sense of the world around them?

Miyazaki: Storyboard Creation

Kindergarten–8th Grade



1



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4



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Objective

You will create a storyboard based on your own story or a familiar myth or legend.

Materials

- Graphite pencil
- Blue pencil (optional)
- Clipboard
- Ruler
- Fine-tip pen
- Sketch paper
- 4 sheets of Bristol board
- Watercolor brush
- Watercolor set

Steps

1. Start your storyboard by thinking about characters and setting. Who are the characters and where are they? What are they doing? What conflict is taking place? Attach your sketch paper to a clipboard and use a graphite pencil to make practice sketches of your story ideas. Make drawings in a sequence so that viewers can tell what is happening.
2. Once you have planned your scene, you can begin your final drawings using graphite pencil or optional blue pencil on Bristol board. Blue pencil is often used by designers and illustrators because it is easier to cover with ink and paint. Sketch out your environment and characters onto your four pieces of Bristol board. Your sketches should be loose and gestural so you can edit your drawings as we move on to the inking stage.
3. After your underdrawings are finished, use a fine-tip pen to ink over the pencil and add other details to your environments, characters, and other objects.
4. When your ink layer is complete, tape your Bristol board to the clipboard and prepare your watercolor set. Taping the board down will ensure that the pages do not buckle as the watercolor is added.
5. Select your desired watercolors and use your brush to add color to your drawings. Start with light layers of paint and gradually build up opacity.