

BLOCK PRINTING USING LATEX: NOTES

A set of skills must be in place before too much innovation in design takes place. Students should know how to print with the correct amount of ink on the plate, how to print with sharp edges, and how to space the prints in a grid pattern with careful spacing. So, the first designs are less important than technical skill with the medium.

After that, innovation with design is the emphasis. There should be adequate research in notebooks so that ideas can be developed from research on ornamental art as well as other kinds of research and student drawings. Help students understand that the strongest design ideas are the simplest. It is the innovation an artist uses within simple ideas that is the challenge.

Help students understand that the quality of their final work depends on the effect of the whole grid design seen at once, not just on a single print. It is what happens when the single designs are printed together that is key. Then how color and value are used in combination, is important.

For students developing a single image for a card, help them refine their image by making more than one cut of the same idea. The latex is soft, somewhat difficult for the medium to hold small detail, so the artist must adapt the idea that is being cut to the medium.

Scaffold the activities to the abilities of the class, allowing for plenty of time for weaker students to develop their skills, while allowing more advanced students can move at their own pace.