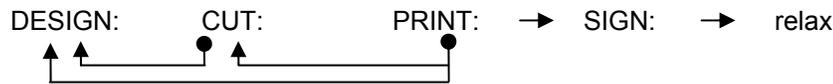


## CASE STUDY

The process for lino cutting, or wood cutting, is the same. First comes the design. Everyone has dry periods, and so I decided to revisit an old multi color print.



**DESIGN, CUT** ~ The design was made and cut a few years ago with multiple blocks.

**PRINT** ~ The objective was to soften the print by using watered down inks, painted onto the multi color blocks, similar to the Japanese technique.

Japanese block printing has a lot in common with more western techniques. For wood, they use the knife much more than perhaps is done in the western world. The biggest difference, however, is the inking and printing process.

The ink, as a rule, is water based being derived from rice and pigment, and then it is painted on the block with a brush and not a brayer. The paper used is of a different construction, and when placed on the block for burnishing with a baren, a second sheet of paper is laid on top to protect the image paper. This is because the paper can tear, especially since they moisten the paper first. There are videos on youtube showing some of the process, for example:-

block 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuCS3uf20Lk>  
block 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFxB\\_l1ed80](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFxB_l1ed80)

Japanese prints used wood almost exclusively. The drawing was first on paper, then glued to a plank of close-grained wood, often cherry.

The ink consisted of pigments and rice starch for adhesion. Ink was brushed onto the woodblocks.

Japanese paper was called washi, “wa” for Japan, “shi” for paper. Made frequently from the bark of some trees.

Multiple colors were managed by a registration technique using kento marks which were cut into each block.

My first experiments used lino blocks used for multi color prints some years ago. Three blocks were used for four colors, and a fourth block was for the black/brown dark color.

A very small amount of water based ink was placed on an ink slab, water added, and distributed with a spatula, and water added again and brushed around with a brush, and from thence to the lino block.

Since the normal block printing ink becomes much wetter, it doesn't dry as quickly. This also means it is less tacky and has less ability to hold a paper on the block. This means that placing the block face down on the paper is asking for paper movement. The initial experiments showed less than perfect registration for that reason. In the initial experiments, the block was placed face down and registration accomplished by corner pencil marks.

So, the registration system needs to have the block face up and the paper placed on top of it. But the watered down ink can enable the paper to tear when burnished with a baren.

The four colors were supposed to be yellow printed first, green second, and blue and orange printed last, before the final brown/black key block.

For reasons unknown, the first experiments used red as opposed to orange.

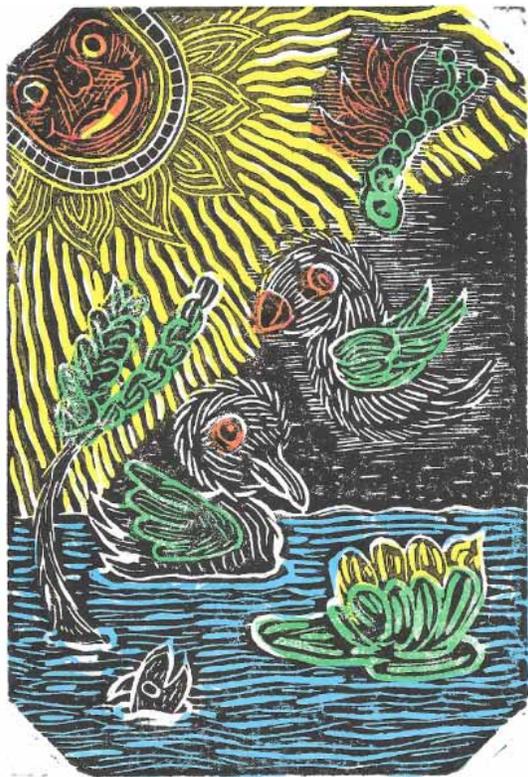
However, a comparison of one of those experiments and the original multi color block using normal printers ink and a brayer are interesting.



The rolled ink original version, to the left, is more precise and the ink printed with more consistency.

However, the paint brush applied watered down printer's ink has a certain element of charm.

Shading can be accomplished by different brushing, or by removing some ink with a cloth. This is a level of control not easily managed with a brayer (roller) application process.



The next step was to use better brushes, better registration (see above), and more care with ink and water mixing, using test pieces of paper to get it right. Also, consider the direction of brushing the ink on the block.

The final print using these techniques is to the left.

QUIET POND

SIMON W-S

Simon

