

Woodblock Prints Lesson Suggestion

LOOKING AT UKIYO-E: A Viewer's Guide

1. Each color in a woodblock print is made from an individual block. How many colors are in your print, and therefore, how many blocks had to be carved?
2. How do you think shades and variations of color and texture were produced on the woodblock prints?
3. What is the overall "tone" or feeling conveyed by your print? How did the artist-craftsman team achieve this tone? What does the tone convey about the time period and society being represented in the woodblock prints?
4. In what ways are the woodblock prints realistic? In what ways stylized?
5. What makes these woodblock prints Japanese?
6. Since the high art of classical times, Japanese visual arts have traditionally incorporated scenes of nature and symbols from nature, such as cherry, plum, and bamboo. What elements from nature are depicted in your woodblock? In what ways is nature integrated into the print?
7. What design elements and motifs are incorporated into your print?
8. There is generally a "oneness of style" in Japanese woodblock prints. What exceptions do you see? Where might these techniques have come from?
9. Many woodblock prints from this period, and from CU's TEA collection depict kabuki theatre, which often focuses on love and tragedy. If applicable, how is the element of tragedy conveyed in your woodblock print.
10. Japanese woodblock prints are noted for their detail. Select a secondary or minor aspect of your woodblock print and comment on the detail provided.