

FAMOUS ARTIST SERIES: Hokusai (1760-1849)

Supplies needed for TWO art projects:

ART BIN:

- Large rubber stamp of woman
- Art project samples (including used, carved and inked foam to show students)
- 4 Rolling pins & 8 Brayers
- Four large ink pads
- Foam sheets, cut into approx. 3.5" x 5" pieces, 1 per student
- White copier paper, cut in half, then to 5" x 7", 1 per student
- White copier paper, cut into quarters, 4.25" x 5.5", 1 per student
- Black construction paper for matting artwork, cut in half to 9" x 12"
- Black Flair Pens (1 per student)
- One Dull Pencil, for demonstration purposes (art project)

CFA CLOSET:

- Paper towels
- Wet wipes
- Extra tubes of printing ink (green, purple, blue) – as needed.
Please use sparingly, as the ink is costly
- Spray bottle, to lightly spritz the ink pads, if needed
- Cardboard as table cloth (for inking/printing station)

OTHER:

- Pencils (from classroom supplies)
- Crayons (from classroom supplies)

OTHER Links for BenQ Board can be pulled up in advance:

- Slideshow  Hokusai pictures

AHEAD OF TIME NOTE:

- Cut foam into 3.5" x 5" pieces and make sure the ink pads are wet.
You may need to add either water or ink (not too much or it will be too watery)
- Cut copier paper to appropriate sizes for both projects
- Copy presentation sheets and evaluations for your use (please leave masters in a plastic sleeve).

- The art project allows students to experience the art of printmaking. They will create an image and transfer it onto paper. **It will be messy**, so have the paper towels and hand wipes nearby when preparing printing station
- Create labels identified with student name, grade/teacher, and Hokusai, either on computer or by hand

PRESENTATION:

Today we are going to learn about an artist who was born over 250 years ago. The artist called Katsushika Hokusai (**pronounced KAT-SU-SHEEKA OAK-SIGH**) was born in 1760 in a poor section of Edo, Japan. Today, Edo is part of the Japanese city Tokyo. For most Americans in 1760, Japan was a strange and far away land. (This was around the same time George Washington was preparing to fight the British for independence in the American Revolutionary War.)

Show [slide #2](#) (Illustration from children's book)

Hokusai lived with his mother. Around the age of 6 she died, and Hokusai was sent to live with his Uncle's family. When their chores were done, his cousins would run out to the street to play games but Hokusai would stay inside and draw pictures on scrap pieces of paper with bits of charcoal he found in the stove.

Hokusai's formal schooling ended when he was 12. This is when he first visited a library and discovered how many books and pictures existed. He spent hours copying the pictures in books. Finally, his talent was noticed and he was offered an apprenticeship as a woodblock engraver in a printing shop. Hokusai found that the engravers copied paintings that he admired! They carved copies of the paintings into woodblocks, applied ink to the woodblock, then turned the woodblock with the ink side down onto paper and transferred the image onto paper with a special burnishing tool, which helped to rub the image onto the paper. The blocks were used to print posters and books. ([Show slide #4](#)– illustration of woodblock printing process) Hokusai couldn't wait to get started!

Has anyone used rubber stamps and ink to make a picture? You can see that even a simple stamp requires many lines to make its image have detail. Imagine "making a stamp" for an entire piece of art! ([Show slide #5](#) – example of rubber stamp print; Pass around the actual rubber stamp)

Hokusai was a very skillful engraver. In his hands, the chisels and knives used on the woodblocks captured each brushstroke in the artist's picture. ([Show slide #5](#) – example of Hokusai engraving) Hokusai soon became a pupil of a famous Japanese artist and began selling his own paintings. Hokusai's paintings were then printed in books and made into posters, too.

Hokusai lived during a time when Japan was ruled by a *shogun*. The word shogun means “general.” Even though Japan had an emperor who lived in a beautiful palace, the shogun ruled the country and his powerful army of samurai enforced his commands. They made laws ordering what they could wear and eat. No books or people from other countries were allowed in Japan because the shogun did not want ideas from the outside world influencing the Japanese people. So Hokusai spent the first part of his career creating traditional Japanese paintings. This included paintings of “*the floating world*,” which is how people described the pleasures and pastimes of life. **Show slide #6 – [painting of women](#)** Pictures of the theatre, sumo wrestlers, dancers and beautiful women depicted “*the floating world*.” This type of painting and woodcut printing is called Ukiyo-e (pronounced “YOU KEY OH E”). The work of Hokusai influenced many American and European artists like Mary Cassatt, Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet, who you may have learned about already or will learn about soon!

Years later, the Shogun opened Japan to Dutch traders. The Dutch brought European books and art to Japan. Hokusai was fascinated by the style of the European artists. Instead of the “flat” appearance of the traditional Japanese paintings, these artists used perspective in their landscapes. This meant that things far away looked small, and things that were close appeared larger. **(Show slide #7, “[Poem by Teishin Ko](#)”, 1835, and compare to slide #6)** Note the “flatness” in the painting of the Japanese women and the depth of perspective used in “Poem by Teishin Ko”. We see a tree up close (left side of painting) and trees in the distance. What else do you see that suggests things that are farther away in the distance? (Birds, animals) Despite criticism from patrons who preferred the traditional Japanese style of art, Hokusai experimented with many new techniques.

Hokusai spent a restless life always looking for new ways to paint. It is said he moved over 90 times and went by over 30 different names during his lifetime. But one thing remained the same: ever since Hokusai was a little boy sketching with charcoal from his stove, he loved to draw, especially his beloved Mt. Fuji. Hokusai’s mother used to sing him songs about the sun goddess who smiled on them from the sacred mountain. His greatest work of art was a series of woodblock prints that show Mt Fuji from all angles in all seasons. This art series, called “Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji,” is considered to be one of the greatest masterpieces in the world today. **([Show slide #8 through #10](#))** Can you find Mt. Fuji in all these pictures? What is the same/ different about Mt. Fuji among the different images?

[Show slide #11](#) (Optional- pass out small images of The Great Wave for students to look at up close) This wood block print was created around 1831 and is part of the “Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji” collection. This is Hokusai’s most famous image. Ask students to describe the details they see. **(How many boats can you find? Can you see the tiny humans being tossed about in the big waves? Can you find Mount Fuji? Do you see how the foam of the wave seems to have claws reaching out for the fisherman?)**

SUGGESTED ART PROJECTS:

(NOTE TO VOLUNTEER: Explain both projects before students get started. Your students will need to take out a pencil to create their own stamp from foam (a dull pencil works best, as it makes thicker lines and will reprint more effectively). Use the tablecloth and make a printing station where you can have small groups of kids come to ink their foam stamps. Have wet wipes and towels at the printing station. Completing the inked print is the priority project to complete.

Today we are going to make **two** different Hokusai-inspired art projects. One will be a drawing done with black Flair pens and crayons and the other will be a print, done with foam, pencils, and ink. **(Show black matted project samples)**

First, you will make a **simplified** print of Mt. Fuji OR The Great Wave Off Kanagawa OR include both images using foam (instead of carving wood!), a pencil, special printing inks, rolling pins and paper. Note that it is important to keep the foam drawing SIMPLE, as it will print better with the inks (plus it's easier to draw a simpler design in foam). Once you have completed your drawing in foam, we will call you up in small groups to the inking and printing station. While you are waiting to be called, you will start on the second project.

PROJECT 1

First, I will describe how to make the foam stamps used to create your inked print (Volunteer - demonstrate steps of carving into the foam with your dull pencil):

- 1) Decide what image you want to “carve”, then lightly draw the image on the foam with a dull pencil. Next, press very hard to carve it in. You have to go over the lines several times to make them deep enough to print well. Remember to keep the drawing simple for the foam and keep in mind that the image you draw on the foam will print out the opposite way on paper. **(Show previously inked foam from project sample, found in the Ziplock bag. Also show what the finished image looks like in the project sample)**
- 2) Next, place your image with the carved side down on the inepad and press with a roller and your hands, inking your piece of foam. Press hard enough to transfer the ink to the foam. Roll it in both directions for even coverage. (Note to parents: You might need to wipe off the roller between inkings.)
- 3) Carefully lift your inked foam and place it wet ink side down in the center of the (5” x 7”) paper. Hold the foam and press in down with the roller to transfer the image to the paper. (Parents: you might have to hold the foam and make sure they press hard enough.) Carefully lift the foam up and admire your work.

PROJECT 2

Now I will describe how to create your detailed drawing:

- 1) Again, choose either Mt. Fuji or The Great Wave (or both) to draw, using your black Flair pen on the white paper (cut to 5.5" x 4.25").

Imagine that you are working alongside Hokusai over 200 years ago, drawing a scene that Hokusai will carve into wood. Show detail in Mt. Fuji and the ocean. You may choose to draw tiny people, boats, birds, pagodas or houses, as Hokusai did. This part of the project will give you some idea of how much detail went into Hokusai's process.

- 2) Color the scene with crayons.

POST PROJECT/CLEAN-UP:

Please close ink pads tightly with a rubber band to prevent them from drying out. Kindly wash the rollers and ink pads with wet wipes for the next person.