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**CREATIVE EDUCATORS**  
**BLOCK PRINTING WITH HANDMADELIFE**

# **BLOCK PRINTING WITH HANDMADELIFE**

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- 2 CREATE YOUR OWN BLOCK PRINT**
- 3 FURTHER INVESTIGATION**
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(cover and background)

*Handmadelife Print Block Workshop 2016 (detail)*

**CREATIVE EBOOKS SHARE  
CONTENT FROM THE  
CREATIVE ENCOUNTERS  
AND CREATIVE  
EDUCATORS PROGRAMS  
AND PROVIDE  
ADDITIONAL  
RESOURCES TO  
INSPIRE AND  
ENRICH  
TEACHING  
AND  
LEARNING IN  
VISUAL  
ARTS  
AND  
DESIGN.**



The NGV wishes to acknowledge The Ullmer Family Foundation for their generous support of NGV Teens.

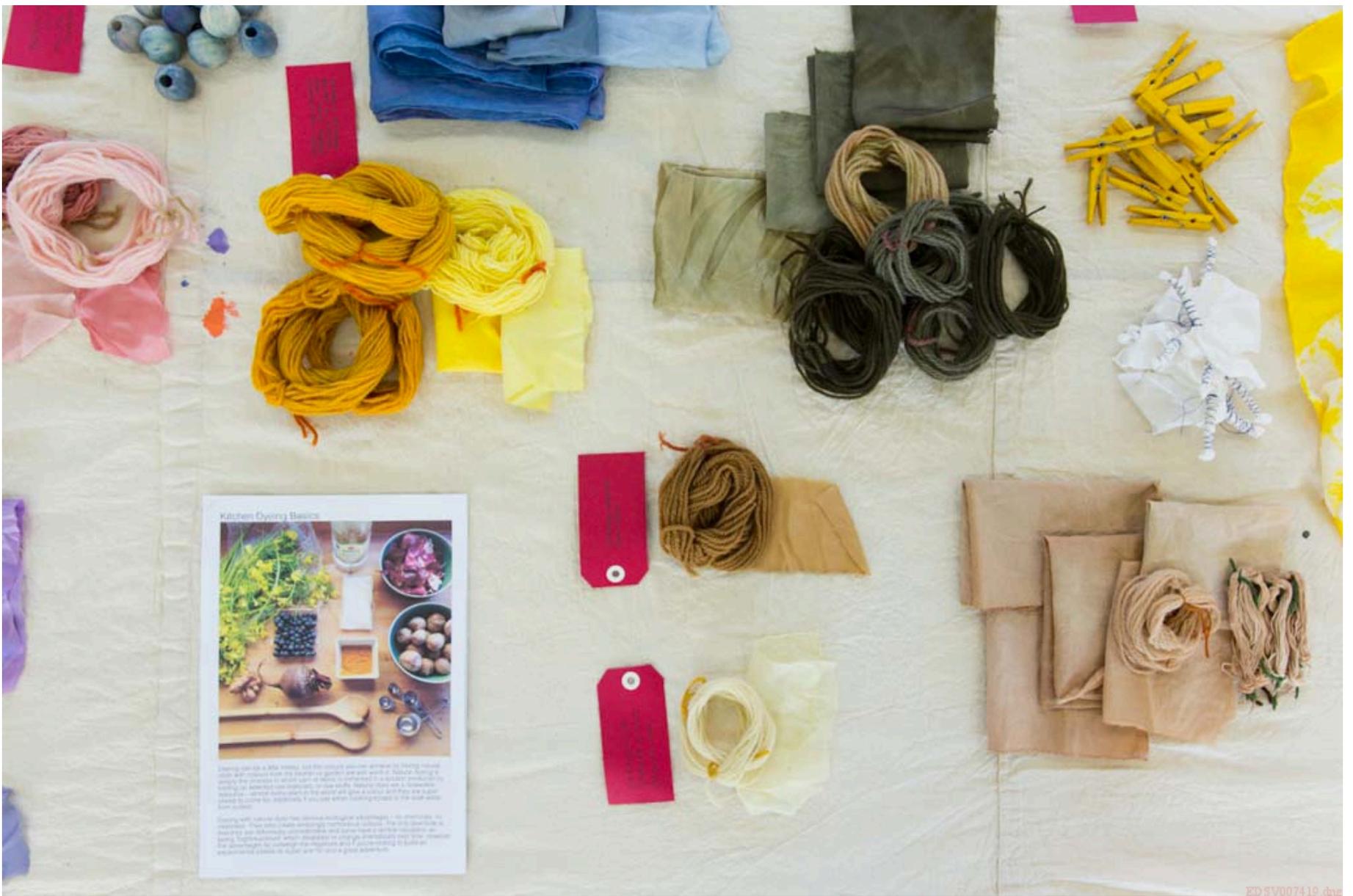


*Handmadelife* is the decade long collaborative craft project of Melbourne based writers and artists Beck Jobson and Ramona Barry. Their collaboration encompasses curation, writing, education, and making. Published works include *I Make Stuff*, *Craft Busters zine*, and *The Craft Companion*, released internationally through Thames and Hudson. They run regular craft workshops in a range of techniques from their studio project space at the Queen Victoria Market, and major institutions such as the National Gallery of Victoria.



When you see this icon, please click for curriculum links.

Ramona Barry & Beck Jobson HANDMADELIFE studio, Queen Victoria Market, 155 Victoria Street, Melbourne. HANDMADELIFE Workshops (C) NGV



*Ramona Barry* is a Melbourne based writer, curator and maker specialising in craft and design, as well as an accomplished painter and poet. Her work has been published widely in both local and international print and online media. She has served as Chair of the Victorian Crafts Council, is regularly called upon to speak publicly about contemporary craft practice and is now the art and cookery pavilion coordinator for the Royal Melbourne Agricultural Show. Ramona relaxes by listening to geek film podcasts while handcrafting Christmas decorations... all year round. See more of Ramona on **Pinterest** and **Instagram**.

*Beck Jobson* is a Melbourne based designer/maker, curator and writer who has worked extensively in the craft and design industry as a designer and mentor. Over a decade at Craft Victoria Beck curated exhibitions, managed events and developed support, advocacy and education programs in roles from Retail Manager to Acting Director/CEO. She now juggles writing gigs, small children, and a textile based studio practice. Beck spends her downtime listening to seventies funk and heavy metal records and watching sci-fi films. See more of Beck on **Pinterest** and **Instagram**

HANDMADELIFE studio, Queen Victoria Market, 155 Victoria Street, Melbourne. HANDMADELIFE Workshops (C) NGV 2016



Beck and Ramona love to make and share ideas! During the first Creative Educators professional learning program at the NGV, we were able to get to know a little more about how *Handmadelife* came to life and what continues to inspire their practice. Beck and Ramona have been working together for decades and talking to them is often like talking to one person; as one begins a sentence and the other finishes it. They met working at Craft Victoria and began by starting a blog, initially to share ideas with each other.

In an animated discussion, both recall how they have always been interested in making and that it is this act that helps them process the world around them. Instinctively they problem solve and think laterally about possible solutions to projects. 'Stay curious', they advise the teachers in our workshop. Their curiosity finds inspiration in cinema, environments, both built and natural, food,

music and other designers and artists including *Flamingo Park*, *Kara Baker* and *Gavin Brown*. Both discover exciting colour palettes from watching films!

They work collaboratively 'mind melding' or 'pushing and pulling' their individual styles to create totally integrated works. They seek to inspire others to make by showcasing and documenting some of the best contemporary international and national artists today.

Together they wrote *The Craft Companion*, a huge text likely to become a bible for all makers. It includes an exciting compendium of different techniques as well as world-wide craft practice and ideas, linking ancient traditions with contemporary craft and art practice.



**WE HAVE A LOT TO SAY  
ABOUT CRAFT. IT'S WHAT  
ENERGISES AND EXCITES  
US. IT IS HOW WE ENGAGE  
WITH THE WORLD, AND  
HOW WE CELEBRATE AND  
COMMEMORATE OUR  
LIVES.**

BECK AND RAMONA - THE CRAFT COMPANION

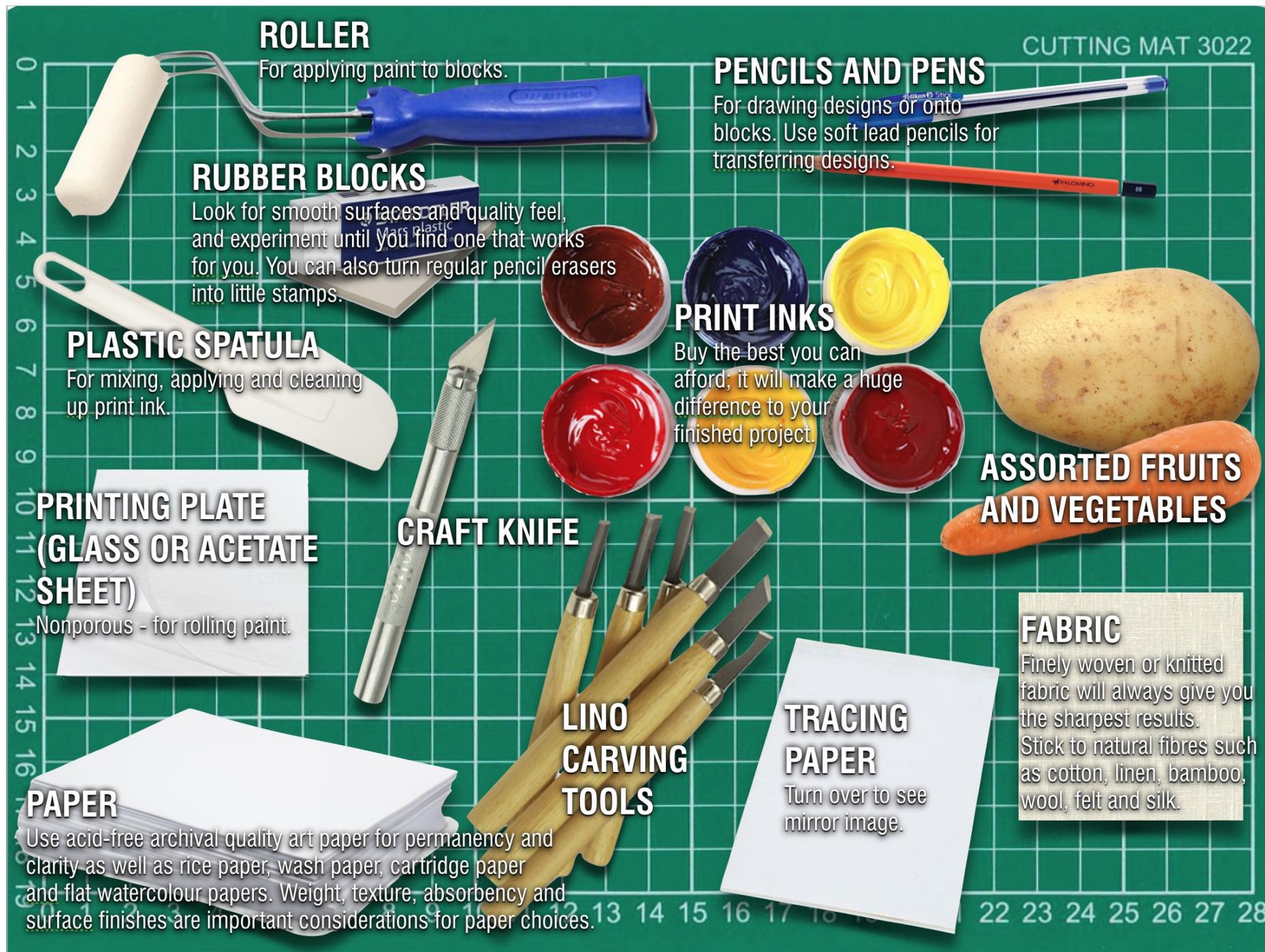


## **What is block printing?**

Block printing is a simple contact printing process used to print designs on paper, fabric or other surfaces.

Many different materials can be used to make printing blocks, including vegetables, lino or wood.

Printing ink is applied to a block by brush, foam roller or direct dipping (depending on the texture of the printing ink).



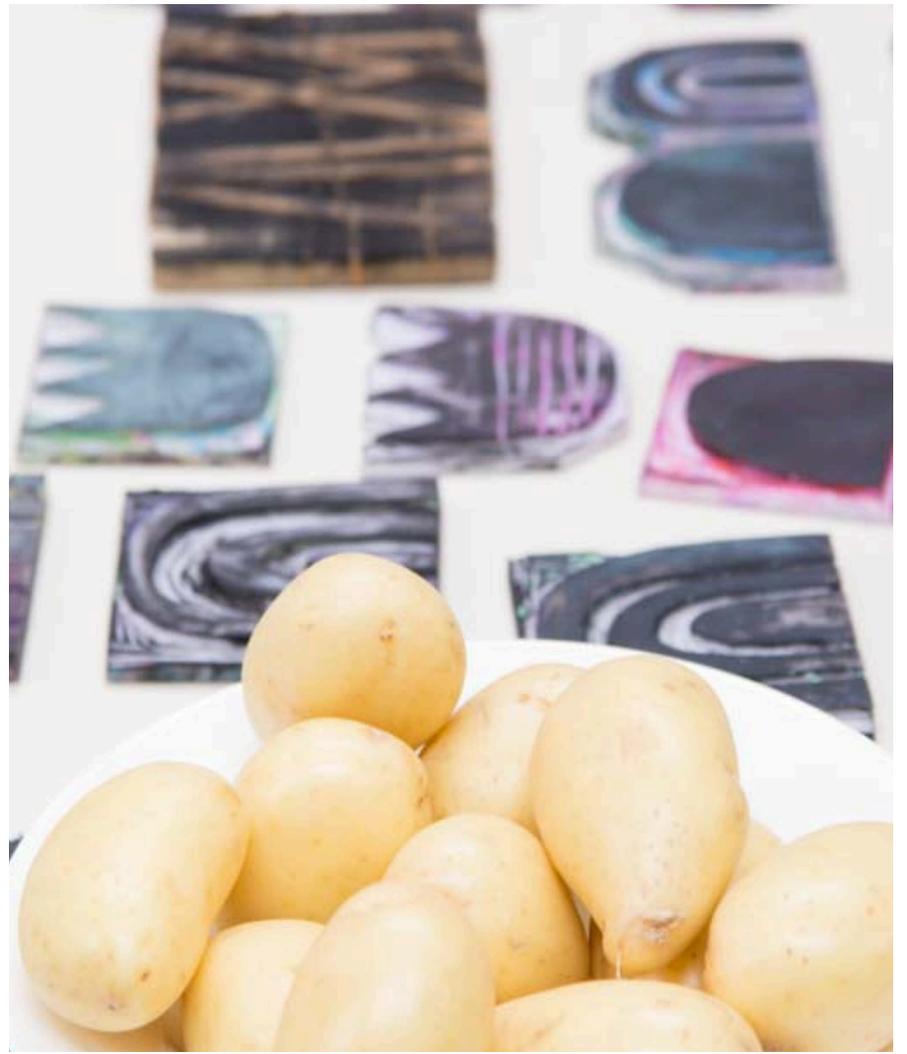
Gather the materials you need to make a block printing.

You may need:

- A printing block. This could be as simple as a potato, or a piece of soft lino or rubber
- Tools to carve or cut your printing block
- Printing ink and tools (i.e. rollers, brushes for applying ink to your block)

- Paper or fabric for printing on
- Paper and pencils for trialling designs and transferring design to your printing block.





Create a basic design for your block print using simple shapes and lines. Straight lines and large surfaces are most effective when block printing. Remember, your print will be a mirror image of your drawn design. You'll need to reverse any numbers, letters and directional marks when designing.

Look at the **ideas and inspiration section** of this book to learn from the work of other artists.



If you are making a relief print, carve away the areas you want to remain white and leave the areas you want to print.

Consider creating a test block. Experiment with lines, dots and shapes of different sizes. It helps to mark crosses into the cutaway sections so that you don't accidentally cut out the wrong section.

**Safety tip:** Carve away from your hand. Carve on a non-slip surface.



Good prints come from well-coated blocks.  
To get the best print:

- First apply ink onto the printing plate.
- Work the foam roller over it in both directions until the roller is coated evenly in ink.
- Take your foam roller and roll the ink right across the surface of your block a couple of times until well coated.

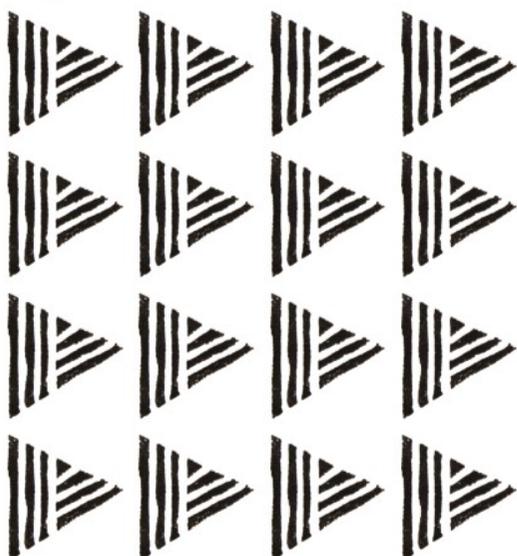
- Lower your block face down onto your fabric or paper and press firmly.
- Gently remove the block from the paper or fabric.

# REPEATS

Use your printing block to create a series of different designs using repetition and different colour combinations.

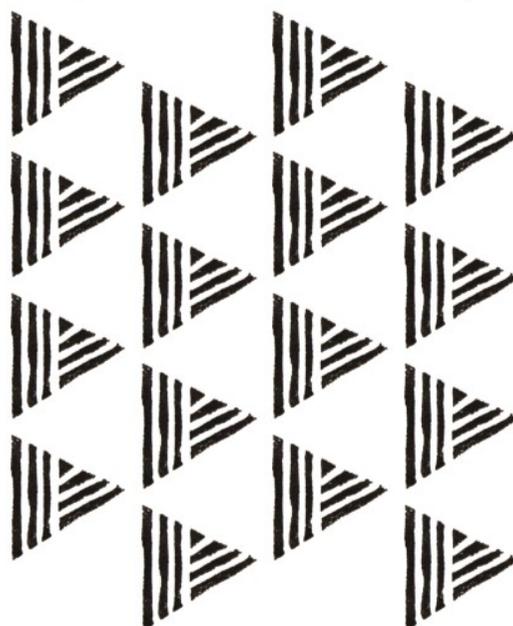
You can extend the design options of even the most basic motif by using repeat systems. Think about how you put your motifs together to maximise their design potential.

**Tip:** Experiment first with cut paper shapes to see how the repeats can affect your design.



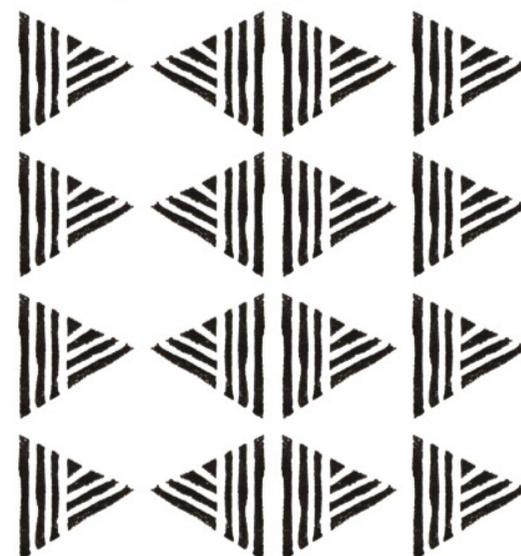
## FULL DROP

Full Drop is a single repeat that takes a motif and repeats it evenly across the fabric vertically and horizontally.



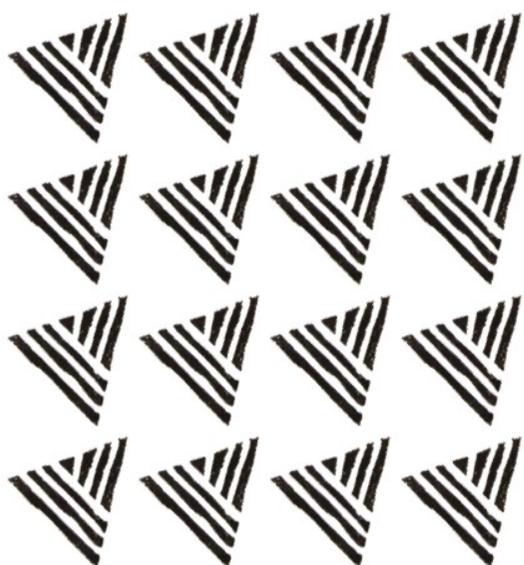
## HALF DROP

Half drop repeat takes a motif and repeats it across the fabric vertically and horizontally but alternatively staggers every other row or column.



## REFLECTION

Reflection is literally a mirror image reflection of your motif.



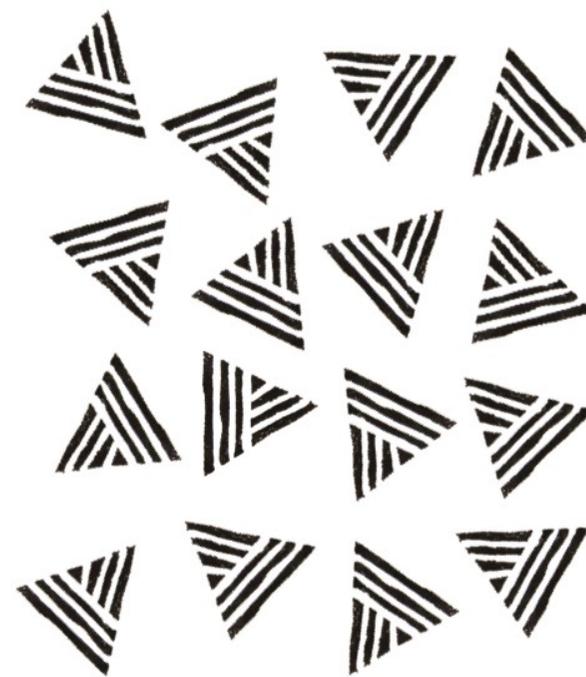
## ROTATION

Rotation is an incredibly useful and transformative process where a motif is rotated around a single point and repeated across the fabric horizontally or vertically.



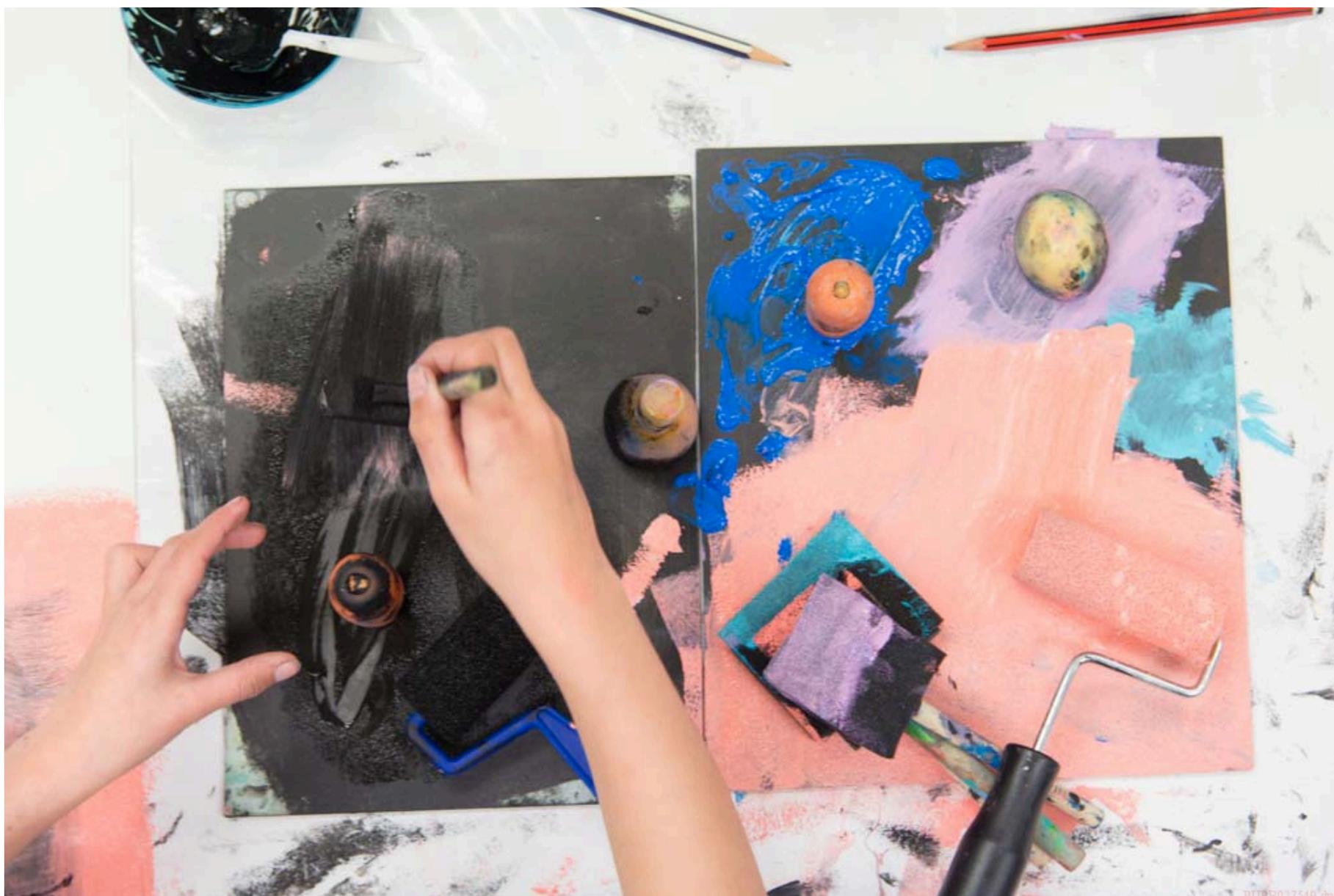
## COMBINATIONS

By combining two or more repeat processes you can extend repeat patterns even further. This motif is rotated 90-degrees and put into a full drop with a mirror reflection.



## RANDOM REPEATS

Repeated motifs are spread randomly. Elements can be spread out evenly or grouped together when working with single motif blocks.



Block printing is an exciting technique that can be explored in a number of ways. Have fun trying out some of the following activities:

- Rubber erasers can be easily carved to make a relief print. Glue several carved erasers or foam blocks to a larger prospect or wooden block to make bigger printing block.
- Try printing with potatoes mashers and other found objects.
- Draw designs using a hot glue gun to achieve linear patterns.
- Find a range of different pasta shapes and create an interesting design by gluing onto a timber plate or perspex
- Glue plastic lace or cut out fun foam shapes and glue onto an old rolling pin. Have fun printing lengths of fabric!
- Print with natural objects such as leaves.
- Overlay and repeat different blocks to build up colours, textures and complexity.





You can use your block print in many different ways including:

- Print on paper to create cards, wrapping paper, or personalised stationary.
- Embellish a pre-made bag or T-shirt or a length of fabric, that could be used for making a cushion.
- If you are working on fabric to make something that can be worn, read the instructions on the printing ink to make sure you know how to make the design permanent.

- Extend your block printing possibilities: design cards, wrapping paper, purses, bags, tea towels, your own personalised stationary, print on a t-shirt, the possibilities are almost limitless.



**THE TECHNIQUES AND  
TOOLS ARE DESIGNED TO  
KEEP IT SIMPLE;  
ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE  
MAKING...**

BECK AND RAMONA - THE CRAFT COMPANION



Block printing has been embraced by artist and artisans the world over and has played a significant role in the development of both art and design.

Research the development of block printing in a particular cultural or historical context, or in the work of one artist.

View the 'Pictures of the Floating World' education resource to learn more about Japanese wood block printing and to view a video of the process.

## **Pictures of a floating world:**

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school\\_resource/pictures-of-the-floating-world/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/school_resource/pictures-of-the-floating-world/)



### **Tsukioka YOSHITOSHI**

*The king of the Tengus teaching martial arts to Yoshitsune 1886*

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/54133](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/54133)

**CRAFT IS THE GLUE THAT  
BINDS US. CRAFT  
PROVIDES AN ALMOST  
MAGICAL LINK TO THE  
HISTORY OF THE WORLD  
AND IS EMBEDDED IN THE  
EVERYDAY.**

BECK AND RAMONA - THE CRAFT COMPANION



Artists and designers are often inspired by the artwork of others. We have compiled a range of different fabric designs and artworks from the NGV collection to help trigger some exciting ideas for your future block printing projects.

**Browse the NGV collection online:**  
[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/)



**Margaret PRESTON**

*Fuchsia* 1928

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/29899/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/29899/)



Michael O'CONNELL (designer)

Textile c. 1933

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/48710/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/48710/)



**Margaret PRESTON**  
*Wheelflower* c. 1929  
[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/25423/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/25423/)



**Poaraar Bevan HAYWARD**

*Dreamtime friends* 1986

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/57131/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/57131/)



**Angela CAVALIERI**

*If he kill or I kill* 1983

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/4564/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/4564/)



**Gavin BROWN (designer)**

*Indian Snakes and Ladders Outfit 1984-87*

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/gavin-browns-indian-snakes-and-ladders-outfit/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/gavin-browns-indian-snakes-and-ladders-outfit/)



7 KOTE, KAMALIA, PANJAB

**INDIA**

*Hand block printing on cotton*

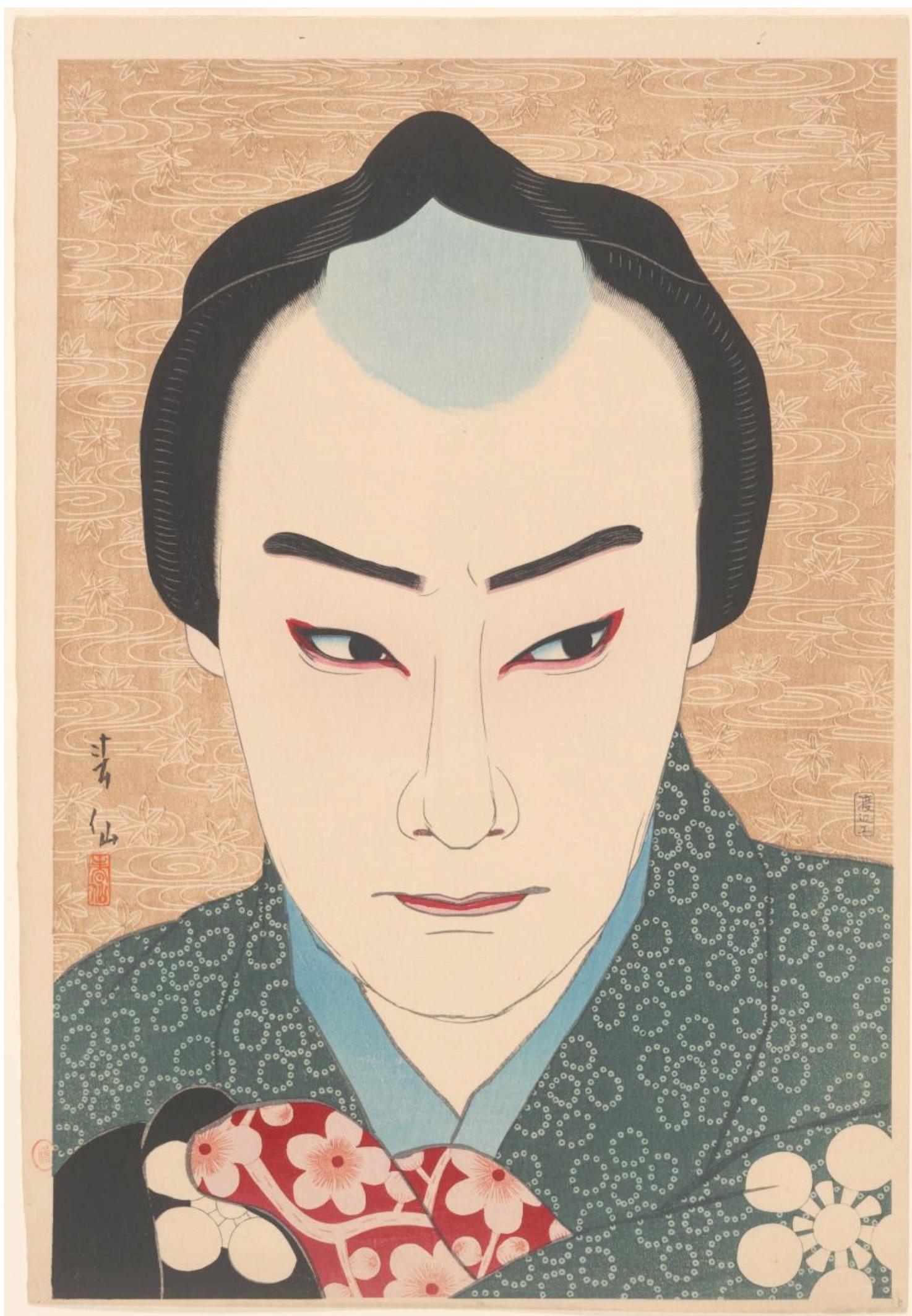
[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51346/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51346/)



Thea PROCTOR

Summer 1930

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/29904/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/29904/)



**NATORI Shunsen**

*The actor Nakamura Ganjiro 1925*

[www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/54139/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/54139/)

## FLAMINGO PARK



In the late 1970s Linda Jackson and Jenny Kee created Flamingo Park; an innovative fashion design label. They pioneered an 'Australian' fashion design that reflected their passion for the unique Australian environment. Their design process often began with designing and printing unique fabric.

## GAVIN BROWN



Gavin Brown is a renowned Australian fashion designer that worked under the fashion label, Plain Jane in the 1980s. He experimented widely with bold and lively hand-printed textiles for his fashion designs.

## KARA BAKER



Kara Baker began her career at The Fashion Design Council, founded in the early 1980s. The FDC was formed to support and promote emerging designers to explore 'the art of fashion design...the individualistic, idiosyncratic, experimental, new and provocative in its wearable and unwearable form'.



**Note:**

Videos only accessible from the Multitouch book version of this resource



## CREATIVE ENCOUNTERS

Creative Encounters is an ongoing NGV Teens program that brings young people together to meet and work with artists, learn a bit about varied art practices, and enjoy a creative outlet during the school holidays. Each iteration of Creative Encounters focuses on a particular NGV exhibition and invites one or more artists to interpret the themes and ideas from the exhibition in a one-off creative workshop for participants. Teens work closely with artists on activities relating to their own work and pulled from their professional practice.

## CREATIVE EDUCATORS

Creative Educators is a professional learning program for secondary visual arts educators led by artists and NGV Educators. Participants are offered the opportunity to view and discuss current NGV exhibitions, see student work from previous workshops, and participate in a similar art-making workshop. Educators learn new skills for classroom engagement based on outcomes from students' own experimentation with and interpretation of a given medium.

Creative Educators programs support the Victorian Curriculum F-10 and the following Australian Professional Practice Standards;

- *Professional Knowledge:* Teachers know the content and how they teach it.
- *Professional Practice:* Teachers plan for and implement effective teaching and learning.
- *Engagement:* Teachers engage in professional learning.