Creating A Mixed Media Landscape
Inspired by the Japanese Woodblock Prints of Kawase Hasui

A Mixed Media (Watercolor and Printmaking) Project for Grades 4 – 12

Goals:
• To create a Master Study of the print by Kawase Hasui.
• To explore printmaking and watercolor painting techniques.
• To experiment with the compositional components of a successful landscape painting or mixed media piece.

Kawase HASUI, Misty Morning, Yotsuya Approach (Tokyo), 1932-3rd month. Color woodblock print. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way, SBMA
Art & Artist: Background

Kawase Hasui (May 18, 1883 – November 7, 1957) was a prominent Japanese painter of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and one of the chief printmakers in the *shin-hanga* movement. Hasui worked almost exclusively on landscape and townscape prints based on sketches he made in Tokyo and throughout the country. His prints feature tranquil locations that are often juxtaposed with increased urbanized areas of Japan.

The *shin–hanga* ("new prints" or "new woodblock prints") movement revitalized traditional *ukiyo-e* art, and maintained the traditional *ukiyo-e* system where the artist, carver, printer, and publisher engaged in a collaborative division of labor, as opposed to the *sosaku-hanga* (creative prints) movement which advocated the principles of self-drawn, self-carved, and self-printed art, in which the artist, with the desire of expressing the self, is the sole creator of art.

The movement flourished from around 1915 – 1942, though it resumed briefly from 1946 through the 1950s. Inspired by European Impressionism, the artists incorporated Western elements such as the effects of light and the expression of individual moods, but focused on strictly traditional themes of landscape, famous places, beautiful women, kabuki actors, and birds and flowers.

Hasui left a large body of woodblock prints and watercolors. He and Hiroshi Yoshida are widely regarded as two of the greatest artists of the *shin-hanga* style, and known especially for landscape prints.
As students view this image, ask them to consider:

*How is the foreground distinguished from background?*

*How has the artist “layered” the print—creating depth, dimension, and perspective?*

What are the atmospheric effects of proximity and distance? How has the artist rendered these effects?

*How has the artist invited the viewer (compositionally) into the scene?*

*Do you see evidence of urbanization? Where? What details can you cite?*

Kawase HASUI, Misty Morning, Yotsuya Approach (Tokyo), 1932- 3rd month. Color woodblock print. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way, SBMA
Features of *Ukiyo-e* Art

Subjects
- travel
- pilgrimages
- landscapes
- nature
- everyday life

Asymmetry
A strong subject, often from nature, located to the right or left of center

Landscape Elements
Positioned in the background, often silhouetted

A Foreground Device
Leads the viewer into the scene

Can you locate these features in this print?

*Kawase Hasui,* *Misty Morning, Yotsuya Approach* (Tokyo), 1932-3rd month. Color woodblock print. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way, SBMA
THE ART LESSON

In this lesson sequence, students will complete two projects:
• a Master Study (mixed media piece) based on the print by Kawase Hasui
• an optional mixed-media landscape of the local environment, inspired by the artwork of Kawase Hasui.

Materials for this lesson:
• Scratch-Art foam printing plates
• pencils
• watercolor paper
• permanent black pens (fine tip Sharpies)
• watercolor paints
• watercolor brushes
• containers of water
• Masonite boards (for taping the watercolor paper)
• painter’s masking tape (blue tape)
• paper towels
• soft brayers (optional)
• water soluble printing inks
• paint brushes for applying printing ink to the foam plates

Kawase HASUI, Misty Morning, Yotsuya Approach (Tokyo), 1932- 3rd month. Color woodblock print. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roland A. Way, SBMA

Prototype by Itoko Maeno, SBMA Teaching Artist
Beginning the Project:

Tape a 9” x 12” piece of watercolor paper to a Masonite board (use painter’s tape).

Invite students to look carefully at the background elements of Kawase Hasui’s print. Ask:

*Where is the horizon line located? What do you notice? (buildings that look as though they are part of an urban landscape)*

Direct students to draw the landscape elements of the city in the distance (building shapes above the horizon line) using very light pencil sketching. Then ask:

*What colors do you see in the sky?*

Students will notice that the sky directly above the horizon is a very pale shade of yellow-gold.

Demonstrate how to mix this color by dropping a slight amount of brown pigment into a pool of yellow watercolor paint.

Brush clear water onto the watercolor paper above the horizon line. Starting at the horizon line, drop the premixed soft gold pigment onto the damp watercolor paper. The gold pigment should disappear into clearness (no color) towards the top of the piece. *Note: Turning the board upside down and allowing the gold pigment to spread down the paper will ensure a graded, soft dispersion of paint. Allow the paper to dry thoroughly.*
Using the image of Kawase Hasui’s print as a reference, add blue watercolor pigment across the top third of the paper, leaving areas of dry paper for the clouds. Refer to slides 1-5. While the blue pigment is still damp, load the clean brush with clear water and lightly blend the blue pigment into the soft gold color described in the previous slide (slide 6). Brush the clear water all the way to the horizon line to avoid visible line breaks between layers of paint application. Allow the paper to dry (slide 7).
Next, students will add the skyline of the city and the body of water, but first the paper must dry thoroughly.

While waiting for the sky to dry, students can create the foam plate for printing the tree and the land area in the foreground of the piece.

Students trace over the outer contour lines of the tree and land details with a black Sharpie pen. The ink will bleed through the copy paper, and the drawn lines will be visible on the reverse side of the paper. Note the corner markings that indicate the edges of the entire composition.
1) Demonstrate how to position the traced image directly over a Scratch Foam plate (a thin sheet of foam). Using a pencil, students should trace over the lines created by the Sharpie.

2) The pressure of the pencil will create indented lines in the foam sheet.

3) Show students how to draw over the indented lines within the foam plate (using a pencil). This will create deeper grooves in the foam plate and make the lines more visible.

4) When they finish, students will set their foam plates aside and continue painting the watercolor background (next slide).
Demonstrate to students how to paint shaded (gray) shapes within the white cloud areas.

Next, paint a wide band of clear water under the pale gold area of the sky. This will be the horizon line of the water and the cityscape.
Drop blue watercolor pigment into the clear water and push the blue paint upward to create the shapes of the buildings in the distance.

Continue adding blue pigment across the page. Then paint additional wide bands of clear water across the paper until it reaches the bottom of the page. The blue paint will flow into the clear water, creating a graded wash of color.
Turn the paper, and drop in small amounts of pale blue watercolor pigment across the bottom of the composition area.

Lift the paper at an angle and allow the blue paint to drip down the page into the (previously painted) horizon line/cityscape pigment.

Let the entire watercolor scene dry completely.
While the watercolor paper is drying, prepare palettes of washable printing ink (yellow, green, brown, blue, and black).

Demonstrate how to mix colors to achieve desired shades, and paint the printing ink onto the foam plate (the tree, leaves, and land in the foreground only). Work quickly to prevent the ink from drying.
Continue painting until the tree and the land areas are completely filled in with ink.

Demonstrate how to carefully turn the painted foam plate over, positioning it on top of the watercolor background. Gently press down on the plate.

Rub evenly over the plate.
Direct students to carefully lift the foam plate from the paper, and admire their completed projects!

Option: Before the residual paint on the plate is dry, roll black printing ink onto a brayer, and roll the inked brayer over the foam plate. Print onto a piece of colored paper to create an additional work of art.
Applying techniques to a new project:

Students can apply the same sequence and use of techniques described in this Master Study to a mixed media project of a scene from the local landscape.

Curriculum Connection

This art lesson reinforces student observations and understandings of the features of different geographic regions within California.

CA History/Social Science Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.
Connections to the Standards
From the National Visual Arts Standards
Creating / Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
  Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
  Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
  Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.
Grade 4
VA:Cr2.1.4 Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.
Grade 5
VA:Cr2.1.5 Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.
VA:Cr2.3.5 Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.

Responding / Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.
  Anchor Standard #7. Perceive and analyze artistic work.
  Anchor Standard #8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
  Anchor Standard #9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
Grade 4
VA:Re8.1.4 Interpret art by referring to contextual information and analyzing relevant subject matter, characteristics of form, and use of media.
VA:Re9.1.4 Apply one set of criteria to evaluate more than one work of art.
Grade 5
VA:Re8.1.5 Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.
Grade 5
VA:Re9.1.5 Recognize differences in criteria used to evaluate works of art depending on styles, genres, and media as well as historical and cultural contexts.
Grades 6 – 8
VA:Re8.1.8a Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.
HS
VA:Re9.1.IIIa Construct evaluations of a work of art or collection of works based on differing sets of criteria.

Connecting / Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.
  Anchor Standard #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
Grade 5
VA:Cn10.1.5a Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.
HS
VA:Cn10.1.1a Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.
This lesson was created by Joni Chancer, SBMA Curriculum Consultant.

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Artwork was created by SBMA Teaching Artists.

For further information about these or other Education and Outreach Programs, contact Rachel Krieps at rkrieps@sbma.net