

Minigrant Outcome Report

Project Title: Exploring Traditional Asian Printmaking Techniques - Spring 2025

With the support of the Miller Arts Mckinnon Minigrant, I was able to further my exploration of Asian style prints and enrich my understanding of modern and traditional forms of printmaking. The grant allowed me to purchase tools that enabled me to explore Japanese-style mokuhanga techniques. The woodcut carving tools enabled me to cut with much more precision and ease than I had previously, and the specialized brushes, inks, and applicators greatly supplemented my ability to print in this style. My learning curve for this technique was definitely high, as the application, tools, and general process were quite unfamiliar to me, but I was happy with the progress I was able to make towards producing prints with this painted quality. I am excited to continue to explore this path through my next year in the printmaking program. I am particularly interested in finding if, using a printing press and modern rollers/brayers, I can create a visually-similar result to the delicate, watercolor-like mokuhanga print.

Additionally, I supplemented my exploration of Asian printmaking techniques by studying etching techniques in addition to the woodcut technique I initially proposed. I had a couple sheets of Kitakata paper left over, so I aimed to create etchings on Asian-style paper, instead of the typical, thicker rag paper that I was accustomed to printing on. These papers differ in their composition – rag paper is typically made of cotton/linen fibers, making them thicker and more durable than Asian papers, which are composed of plant fibers (gambi fibers particularly, for the Kitakata papers I bought). As the etching process requires wet paper, I had to adjust the processes that I was used to to accommodate the lighter, thinner, and generally more-delicate paper. Though I did run into hiccups at first with drying this paper – as the flattening solutions I had been accustomed to with thicker paper did not work for the thinner one – I was able to respond to those challenges and am very happy with the result. I was also able to further my etching technique by completing a surface roll onto this paper as well, which helped me see first-hand how I could incorporate techniques and tools from various origins into one, finished print. I am eager to continue my exploration of bridging modern and traditional printing styles, and I am very grateful to the Miller Arts program for giving me the opportunity to do so. Thank you!

Budget:

Kitakata Light Green Paper - \$8.21 a sheet - (25 sheets): \$205.25

- The Kitakata Paper Roll (initially budgeted \$88) was not available at the time of grant, so it resulted in a more expensive purchase as I had to buy individual sheets (from the local Creative Framing & Art Box store). To accommodate for this in the budget, I did not end up purchasing any Mulberry Paper (initially budgeted \$77.50).

Fibre-covered Bamboo Baren: \$11

Ink Sticks (Yamoto Set & Boku-undo): \$104

Nori Paste: \$13

Flexcut Woodcut Carving Tools: \$155

Brushes (#1 & #2): \$65

Total: \$553.25



Left: Woodcut – “If Figs Were Real” on Kitakata Light Green Paper

Right: Mokuhanga-inspired Woodcut – “If Figs Were Real” on Gray Newsprint

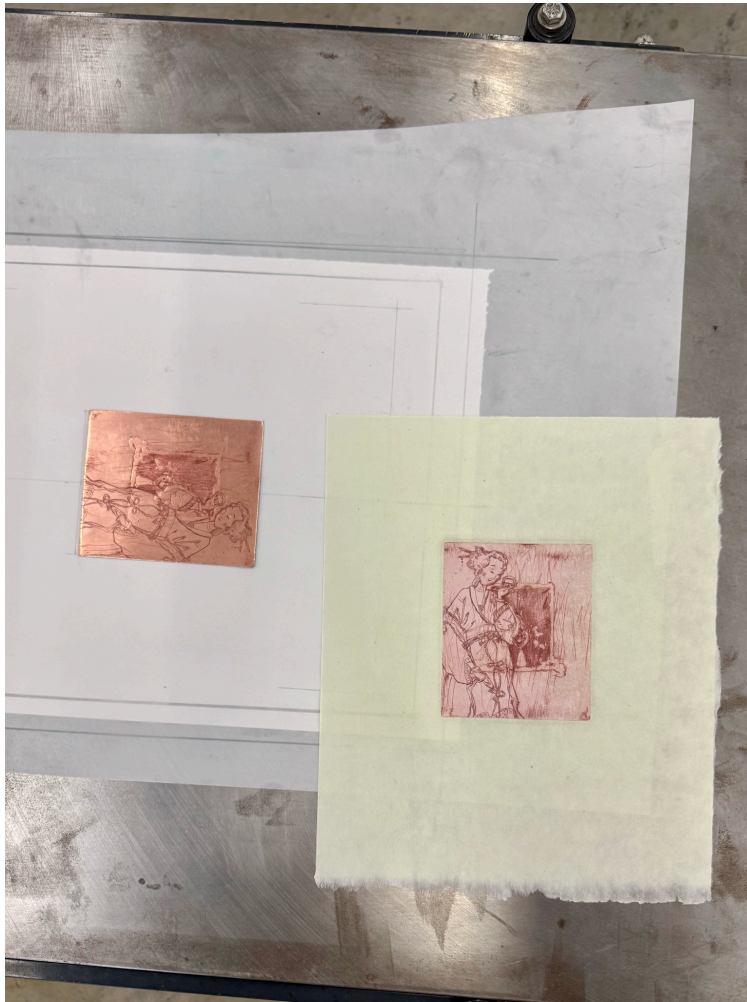
- I found the right version to be much more effective in conveying the message of this print, with interesting visual variation and shading. I have quite a ways to go in practicing this technique, but I’m excited to continue to learn new processes in my printmaking practice!



Left: An early etching – “Unnamed; Girl with Window” on Kitakata Light Green Paper

Right: A later etching – “Unnamed; Girl with Window” on Kitakata Light Green Paper

- The drying/rippling of the Asian paper after etching was greatly improved through lots of trial and error.



Bonus photo: Trying surface rolls – “Unnamed: Girl with Window - Red” on Kitakata Light Green Paper

- I really enjoyed being able to experiment with surface rolls while etching on the Asian paper. I think this photo really shows just how thin (and translucent) the paper really is.