

Art:

Visual Art and Culture

The importance of birds to many cultures throughout history was mentioned during ***It's All About Birds!*** Japanese silk screens represent this importance, exemplified by Doodle, the Sandhill Crane, as birds are often incorporated into these works of art. Animals such as the crane have an important place in Japanese culture. To the Japanese people, cranes symbolize long life and marriage. Another common animal seen in Japanese art is the carp, or *koi*. This fish symbolizes perseverance, faithfulness, and good fortune.

Silk paintings with these symbolic creatures were not only created on screens, but they were also popular when placed on hanging scrolls. Printmaking is another method popularized in Japan where an artist sketches an image on a wooden block, and the engraver then carves out the image in high relief. The image is then coated with ink and stamped onto paper, linen, or other medium. In addition to *relief* prints such as *wood carving*, other types of printmaking include *intaglio* which features many popular techniques we see today such as *screen printing* and *etching*. In this activity, students will be able use their knowledge and observation of Japanese art to create a scroll painting, as well as to create simple relief stamps.

Activity: Your Name in Print!

Grade 6

Standard 2.1: Recognize and describe the cultural and ethnic traditions which have influenced the visual arts including European, American, Native American, African American, Hispanic, and Asian traditions.

Standard 3: Visual Art Expression – The student will observe, select, and utilize a variety of ideas and subject matter in creating original works of art.

Objective: Students will learn about artistic methods common throughout Japanese culture and history. They will also create their own personal works of art based upon their knowledge of Japanese art and their observation of ***It's All About Birds!*** In doing so, students will demonstrate their knowledge of art vocabulary, proper care, and a variety of media and techniques.

Materials: White paper – Length approx. 3 times the width depending on resources (8"x24")
Small Paintbrushes
Tempura (poster) paint
Paint trays or disposable plates
Water cups
Thick black Sharpie
Strips of cardboard or Styrofoam plates

White glue

Japanese to English alphabet book from library OR

[Online Japanese Name Translator](#)

2 small dowel rods (or sticks that students find) per student –Width of paper

Yarn or string to hang paintings

Procedure:

- 1) Hand out one sheet of white paper to each student. Each sheet of paper should have approximately a 3:1 length: width ratio to resemble authentic Japanese scroll paintings.
- 2) Have each student gather 1-2 paintbrushes, a paint tray or plate, and several colors of paint-- to be placed on their plates. Each student should also be within reach of a cup of water used to clean their brushes.
- 3) Have the students discuss the ***It's All About Birds!*** program for a few minutes to help refresh their memories.
- 4) Each student should pick their favorite animal or scene from the program and recreate it on their “scroll.” Encourage them to be creative with colors and space, and help to keep Japanese art elements on their minds (Vibrant colors, contrast, nature scenes, landscapes, and movement are all commonly found in scroll paintings).
- 5) As students finish their paintings, allow them to look up their name in Japanese characters. Have them copy it onto a sheet of scratch paper.
- 6) When making stamps, remind students that everything on the stamp will be in reverse when placed on paper. With this in mind, have each student draw their characters in reverse with a thick black marker onto a strip of cardboard or the back of a Styrofoam plate.
- 7) Outline the design with a pencil. If using cardboard, when students outline their characters with pencil, have them press hard enough to create an indentation or small cut.
- 8) Hand out white glue to each student and allow them to trace over each drawn character with the glue. It should be thick enough to not see the cardboard underneath, but not so thick that it runs. Allow glue to dry where it will not be disturbed.
- 9) While the glue is drying (may take awhile to harden), hand out 2 dowel rods to each student (you may have students go outside and find their own sticks if there is time). Have them wrap the top edge of their painting around the dowel rod and secure it with glue. Repeat with the bottom edge. Hand out a piece of yarn or string to everyone. It will be tied to the top dowel rod with 2 simple double knots on either side of the painting.
- 10) Once all glue has dried and hardened. Have students get out their paintings and decide where they would like to stamp their names. Have each student coat their glue stamps with black paint, and place them on their paintings.

Activity: 7 Design Principles

Grade 6:

Standard 1.1: Describe and apply knowledge of the principles of design: rhythm, balance (symmetrical, asymmetrical, radial), contrast, movement, variety, center of interest (emphasis), and repetition in his/her own art work, and the art works of others.

Objective: Encourage creativity based on an outside source while students learn the 7 principles of design.

Materials: 12"x18" sketch paper (or white construction paper)
Colored pencils
Rulers

Procedure:

- 1) Hand out 1 sheet of 12"x18" sketch paper and a ruler to each student. Each student should also have access to a set of colored pencils.
- 2) Using the ruler, have each student measure his/her paper and divide it into 6 equal sections.
- 3) Using animals from ***It's All About Birds!*** as base images, the students will demonstrate 6 of the 7 principles of design—one in each box. The students may pick which 6 principles they would like to use, or they may be randomly assigned.

Example: Using our white cockatoo, Merlin, as a base. Students could demonstrate *contrast* by drawing him with a black background. Another example would be to draw both Merlin and Russel, our black crow, next to each other.

- 4) Ensure that all students are able to explain how each of their pictures depicts a particular principle of design.