



DC Art
Press

THOUGHTS ON PRINTMAKING

An artist's discussions on
printmaking procedures.

Printing “Ascension Study” Woodblock

Leon Loughridge

Printing the Woodblock “Ascension Study”.

The small woodblock is a preliminary study for a larger and expanded version of the same image. The hope is that I will make all my mistakes on this smaller woodblock and not on the larger version. The tactic has worked well in the past.

I will have a question on the larger version which I can explore on the study.

Interestingly, I made a similar mistake on both the study and final versions which required the same solution for both. I illustrate that further on.

The first color runs were very pale ochres that developed a warm undertone in the sky and foreground. One has to have faith that the image will develop as it doesn't look like much at this stage.



The Ugly Duckling Stage

It seems that all woodblocks go through what I call an Ugly Duckling stage when the lighter values are being set. The blue in the mountains gave hope that the image will develop beyond that monochromatic stage. At this point there have been seven color runs.



Selective Printing

One of the joys of printing with the Japanese style of printing is the versatility of the process. On this color run, the green was printed using just the bottom portion of the block. The top edge of the color was feathered to create a soft edge.



Adding A New Section

I carved away an area of green below the chapel that I wanted and so needed to create a block to print that area. Instead of a whole new block, I used an uncut

area of the block and made new registers.



Reducing The Block

For the eight color runs printed so far, only two blocks have been used (one block, both sides). The cool block has done the bulk of the printing. With the sky and peaks mostly done, I carved a buffer around the mid-ground mountain which printed next.



The Two Previous Layers Printed

This layer shows the green printed from the newly carved block and the mid-ground mountain printed from the full cool block. The small triangle below the chapel, which was missing color, was filled in using the added carved block.

At this point the image is starting to evolve and move beyond that Ugly Duckling stage.



Adding Color Accents

Moving back to the warm block, it was carved to print a pale warm red on parts of the chapel. Again, just the bottom portion of the block was used to print the color. There was no need to completely carve away unwanted areas, but just enough of a buffer around the area to print.

Printing slows down at this point with more thought given to each new color layer added.



Building Texture and Pattern

The pattern in the mid-ground mountain is subtle and not evident at first glance. The next color run will accent that pattern. The subtlety of the color layer allows the pattern to be secondary to the main subject, the chapel.

The end is in sight at this point with a hopeful four color runs to completion.



Building Value

Texture and value is built with multiple color layers instead of trying to print it all in one shot. The image on the left shows the color and layer that was printed over the previous color run.

The added color allows the pattern to show in the open areas of the mid-ground mountain.

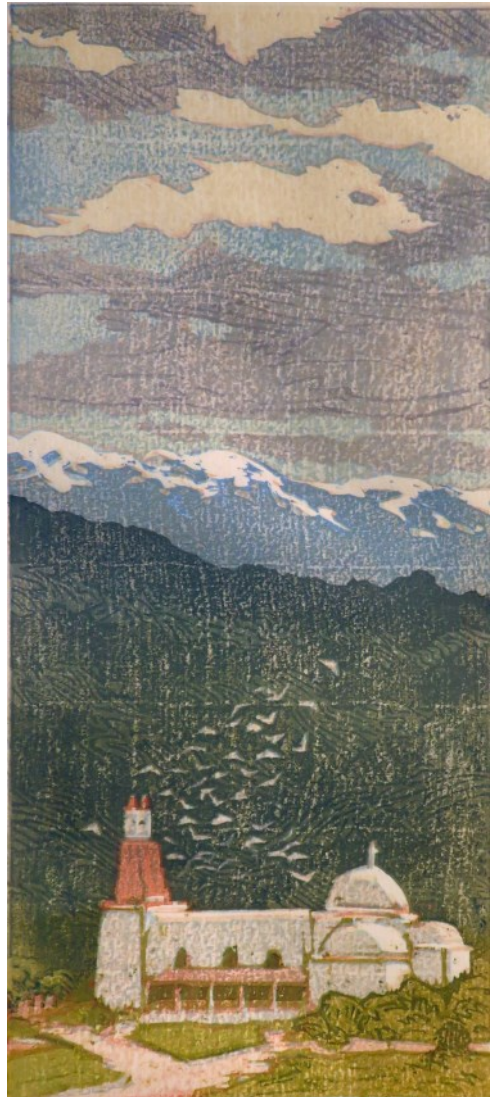


The Final Color Runs

There is little left of the original wood-block as most of it has been carved away over numerous carvings and printings.

The final color runs are drawn in with a felt tip pen and then that line work carved.

A color softer than black is used to print the darks as a black can often be too stark and not harmonize with the other colors.



Please feel free to email me with questions, suggestions or corrections. This has been a wonderful learning experience and I look forward to more challenges as I continue to print.



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