
From Block to Print: A Printmaking Daily Challenge with Katharine Watson

Chapter 1 - From Block to Print: A Printmaking Daily Challenge

Overview

(peaceful music) - Hi I'm Katharine Watson, I'm an artist and printmaker. And I love printmaking because there are so many options of what you can make, from the patterns that you carve to the final products that you print. So in this daily challenge, I will introduce you to some of the basics of block printing. And if you already are an illustrator or you like to draw and you'd like translate some of your imagery into printmaking, this will be a perfect class for you. I will help you get started with the materials that you'll need, and we'll walk through the techniques step by step, building towards a more complicated art print. So if this is your first time printmaking, I want to encourage you to let go of what you think you might be able to create, and just see how you work with the materials, and you might be really surprised with what you can come up with.

Materials

- Here are the basic materials that you are going to need for this daily challenge. We have four types of linoleum that we're gonna be using. This is a Soft-Kut. This is a Golden-Cut. This is a Wonder-Cut. And this is a mounted Battleship Gray. We're mostly gonna be using the Soft-Kut because it's easier to work with. It's easier to carve and to print. So that's the one that we're gonna be using for most of these projects. But as we're going through the test phase, if you find that there's one of them that you prefer, you can definitely continue with that material. We'll be testing each of them in the first step, but the Soft-Kut is the one that I'll recommend for this, and that's what we'll be using mostly. These are the carving tools that you're gonna be using. So I recommend this Speedball carving set. And I recommend buying two of them. With the set, you get one handle and then multiple blades. And you can change the blade. And I like to have at least two so that you're not changing the blade every time you need to make a different size to cut. So I recommending having two of these Speedball carving sets. And then you'll see me use some of these file tools with the wood handle. You definitely don't need to use those. They're a higher end carving tool. They're not necessary, and I've used the Speedball sets for years. But I do like to use these if I'm gonna be doing a long day of carving just because they're a little bit more comfortable to work with over long periods of time. But you can get very similar results with the Speedball carving set, so I definitely recommend starting there. Then here we have this brayer. This is what we're gonna use to roll on the ink. Then for our image transferring, we have tracing paper and a variety of pens and pencils. So we have two types of Sharpie. We have a ballpoint pen, pencils, and this white pen. And then for printing, we have these inks. For this class, we'll be using this Caligo Safe Wash Ink. So it's an oil-based ink. And I love printing with oil-based ink just because you get a cleaner print and the ink is a little bit thicker. And I think it just, it prints a lot better, and it looks a lot better after it dries. And this is great ink because even though it's oil-based, you can clean it with soap and water. So we have a black for the main portion of the daily challenge and then a white for our final day of printing. And then we won't be using a press for this class. So we have two printing implements here. We have the baren, and then we have a metal spoon. And you can use, you can go back and forth between these, and I'll give you techniques for that when we get to the printing phase. Both work well, but I do recommend getting the baren for the larger art print that we'll be working on at the end. And then also for printing, we have a sheet of Plexiglas which you'll use to

roll your ink out. For cleanup, we have a razor scraper which you will use to scrape the ink off of the Plexiglas sheet. Then we have a dish soap which you'll need to clean up the ink. You can't just clean it with water, so you'll need a dish soap for that. I like to wear rubber gloves when I do the cleanup portion of this because the ink is very harsh on your skin if you're using it over time. And it's just cleaner and easier to wear the gloves, so I use that for the cleanup portion of the printing. And don't forget to print out your class PDF.

Day 1 - Carving techniques

- For day one, we're going to talk about the carving tools that we're using, some safety tips, and then we're gonna test on the linoleum. When you get your carving tool out of the box, it will look like this. And it can open from the base, like that and you can keep your extra blades in there. We're gonna start with number one. So you take the round ended and put it in the top. And then tighten like that. And then you can put the base back on your carving tool and it's ready to carve. For this project, we're using a four by six piece of Wonder-Cut Linoleum. And we're going to start carving and you wanna be very careful when you're carving to never point the knife towards yourself. It's really easy to slip your knife while you're carving. So just make sure to always turn the linoleum and never point the knife towards you or towards your fingers. And that way, you won't end up stabbing yourself with the knife. For this project, we're just gonna make little marks in the linoleum with all of the different blade sizes that you have just so you can see how it feels and get used to carving. So just experiment with each of the different tool sizes. And so one, this is number two. And you can do little marks. We're gonna do some straight lines, some curved lines and some shapes and then carve out a larger area just so you can see how the carving feels and get comfortable using these tools without the pressure of working on an actual image. And then tool number three is a little bit wider and it has a rounded edge as well. And this is tool number five. This is the biggest tool in the set and I often use this for backgrounds, and carving out the negative space. Now back to tool number one, the smallest tool and we're gonna carve some longer lines. And you wanna hold on to the edge of the linoleum, not putting your fingers in front of the knife. And just get steady pressure like that. And this might take a couple of tries to get used to carving a straight line without slipping. So just slowly, carve a straight line. And you'll be able to find out how much pressure you need just by experimenting. You need to be pushing down, not too hard. But you definitely need to give it a little bit of pressure and that's something you can experiment with in this section. And then we're gonna move on to the next biggest tool. That's number two and do the same thing. And you might find that you need to give a little bit more pressure with the bigger tools. Just keeping it steady and again, if your linoleum starts to slip a little bit, don't try and catch it by putting your hand in front of the tool. We're using this slightly larger V. This is tool number three. And again, you might need to vary the pressure a little bit from the one that we were just using. And you'll start to see the different shapes and depths that you can get with each tool. And as we move towards bigger projects, we'll be using each of these different tools and shapes as part of our carving. So it's good to get comfortable with the different sizes that you can get from each one. And now we're using tool number five. This is the biggest tool. You can go over it again if you didn't put enough pressure the first time. And you often find that this is the tool that slips the most, which is hard if you're carving out the background of an intricate print you wanna be very careful not to make a mistake right at the very end. So you might need to hold this one a little bit more firmly. And you can try varying the pressure a little bit. You can see that if you push harder, you'll get a wider mark and if you don't push as hard, you won't get such a wide mark so, just play around and experiment with

that. And then you can use any of the tools for this but we're just gonna try, I'm using tool number two. Just try carving some curved lines. See how that feels and see how much pressure you have to use. And then you can try carving some cross hatching. So see how it feels to go back over an existing line. And then you can try, let me try a different tool. Try carving a shape. Let's try carving a square and just practice turning it for each side of the square, instead of carving towards yourself. And then you can try carving out a negative space with the biggest tool, number five. And you'll notice how the knives wanna slip a different point of the carving and just how much pressure you need. So just use this piece of linoleum to get comfortable with that. Let's try a circle and you'll see that you're gonna spin the linoleum instead of moving the knife towards yourself. So you can position it here. Start carving and as you start to go around the corner, you'll move the linoleum just like that. And you never wanna get in a position where your hand is here. So keep it behind the knife. Turn the linoleum as you go. And it'll take some practice to get the depth right and to make the line smooth, especially on circles and curved lines. So don't worry about that to begin with and we'll just keep practicing. And now, we can carve out the inside of the circle. So take your large tool again and just practice going up to the edge of the line without cutting over the edge. You can do a bit more of a circular motion to follow the edge of the circle. And then straight across the middle. And if your knife slips, it's okay. That will definitely happen so don't feel bad if you make a mistake at this stage. You can go back over it. And then for our final little piece here, we're gonna do a little bit more cross hatching with our think blade. And this is the one that we're gonna use to carve out the smaller details. And so you wanna have nice control over it so that you can get small shapes carved out. And you can do some carved lines. And just make sure you're holding on to both surfaces tightly so you're not slipping too much. And you can go back over that. And I like to pause every few seconds and just brush away what's there. You can use additional pieces of linoleum, if you want. But just keep practicing the marks and the pressure that you need and moving the linoleum around so that you're not pointing the knife towards yourself. You can use as many pieces as you want to get comfortable with the knives. You can try different shapes. Try a little image if you'd like to. And just get comfortable with the tools.

Day 2 - Testing linoleum types

- Here are the four types of linoleum we'll be working with today. So we have the mounted Battleship Gray, we have a Golden-Cut, the Wonder-Cut, and the Soft-Kut, and today we're just gonna feel the difference of carving the four different types of linoleum. We'll start with the drawing, so I like to start, if I'm free-handing the design and I'm doing it straight on the linoleum, I like to start drawing with a ball-point pen just to mark out what I'm gonna do. So, we're gonna do a simple leaf design on this, and I'm just gonna sketch it out with a ball-point pen first, and then go over it with the Sharpie, and I like to use Sharpie because it shows up a lot better, and also, the thickness of the Sharpie is a little bit truer to what the knife will be able to carve. This is really thin, so you're not gonna be exactly following the ball-point pen. So that's the way I like to do it, and we're just gonna use the Sharpie from now on, so I'll just trace over that, and you don't have to be exact. We're just doing this to test out the linoleum and see how it feels. Don't worry if your lines don't match perfectly. So we'll just draw this simple shape on each of the types, and then when you start carving, you will see how different each one of the carving surfaces feels. These two especially are much smoother than this one, and you'll notice that the pen moves a little bit differently on each, and you'll feel that with the knife as well. This one's much rougher, and I like this rough linoleum, personally. I like the texture of it, and I find it a little bit smoother to carve with, but it's just

a personal preference. I know a lot of people who prefer each of these different types of linoleum, so that's why we're testing all four, is that they're all great products, and they all can give you a really good print, but they all will be a little bit different, and then you'll notice that this one is probably the smoothest. This is a rubber-based product, so it feels different, and like I said, if there's one that you prefer and you would like to keep moving forward with that one, you can definitely choose your favorite at this point, once we're carving and printing each of these. We're going to start with the mounted Battleship Gray. This block is on wood, so it comes pre-mounted and it makes it a little bit easier to print, and you'll notice that this type of linoleum is a lot more slippery than the Wonder-Cut that we just used, so just make sure you have a tight grip on that before you start carving, and you might notice that your knife slips a little bit more because the carving surface is a little bit thinner, so if it slips, that's okay, we're just testing the linoleum, and you wanna go nice and slow. You'll find that you slip less if you're going slower and holding on a little bit more firmly. And you should notice now that feels very different than the one from yesterday. It's a smoother texture, and it's a little bit denser, so it requires more pressure, and if you're slipping around, don't worry about it, we're just practicing, so just keep going, and try and get that image carved out. And I like to use the lines as a guide. I'm not worried if I slip a tiny bit and I don't get exactly on the Sharpie, that's okay, so it's there as a guide, and not as a rule. There we go. Next we're gonna carve the Golden-Cut. Again, we're using the #2 knife, and just as with the last linoleum, the Battleship Gray, you'll find that this is a much more slippery linoleum, so you'll wanna hold onto it more firmly than we did yesterday, and again, if you slip, it's okay. We'll see, you have to hold it pretty firmly, and put a lot of pressure on this type of linoleum, and these last two linoleums are not my favorite just because of how much pressure you need to apply. I prefer the slightly softer linoleum. So again, just make sure you're carving away. You can see how the linoleum will start to slip a little bit and get away from you, and you wanna make sure it's not, the knife isn't facing you when that happens. And these are the hardest linoleums that we're gonna work with. The ones that we'll be using for the next few days are gonna be softer than this. This is just to get a feel for what's out there, and again, it's a personal preference. You might end up loving this linoleum, and you like how it carves, you can keep going with this. Then, if you get to a point like this where you can't quite grip it with just your fingertips right at the edge, you can turn it around and carve that way, just to make sure you're never pointing towards yourself. Next, we will be carving the Wonder-Cut, so the same one that we used on Day One. So you've already carved this one before, you'll be familiar with how it feels. You'll need a little bit less pressure than with the last two that we tried, and like I said, this is one of my favorite linoleums to carve, because it has a really nice texture and it carves more easily. And you wanna carve fairly deep into the surface. One mistake that people make when they're starting is that they carve too lightly, so they'll just do this, and then when we ink it up, the ink is going to get stuck in that. It's not deep enough to make an impression, so you wanna give it a little bit more pressure and make sure that you're actually carving in. The last one that we'll be using is the soft cut, and this is the softest of the materials that we'll be using, and you'll see that it carves with a lot less pressure, so you wanna make sure that you're not pushing too hard on this one. It's a lot more rubbery, and it carves much easier than the other three, so with this one, you wanna be careful that you're not pushing too hard. You don't wanna go through the material. And again, you wanna make sure you're not pushing too hard, but that you're getting a solid line out of that. If you're carving too lightly, like this, you won't. The ink will fill up that line, and you won't get a clear impression. And you can see, this one's a lot faster to carve, and we're gonna be using this material the most during this challenge, just because it carves more quickly, and it also gives a really nice, clean print, so it's a

great material to start with. Now that you've tried each of these four materials, you'll see how different they are. You will also notice that they're very different when we print them, which will be coming up later in the challenge, and so I encourage you to just think about which of these that you liked working with the most, and then we'll see how you get different textures with each of these materials when you print.

Day 3 - Positive vs. negative

- For day three, we are gonna talk about positive versus negative space. So when you're carving, you can either carve out your image or you can carve out the background of the image. And today, we're going to do two carvings side by side so you can see the difference between the two processes. To do your transfer, you're going to take your PDF that you printed out and take a pencil and you're just going to trace over the image on here. And this is how you transfer an image. If you'd like to, you're welcome to freehand it onto the linoleum. But this is how you can transfer the images quickly from the PDF onto your linoleum block. And with this one, we're gonna transfer it twice so that we can see the positive versus negative space. So we're gonna do two carvings of the same image. For this project, we're working with two pieces of four by six soft cut. So you take your traced image on the PDF, flip it over, and you can line up the corners roughly with the corners of your block like that. You can also cut around the edge of the PDF if you wanna make it easier to see where to line it up. And then when it's face down, just take your pencil, you can also use a spoon or any other hard surface and just draw on the back like that. And that will transfer the pencil onto the block. So it's pretty light, but it should give you enough of a guide. And you can press harder and you'll get a harder impression. And next, you will take your Sharpie and just draw over those pencil lines. And just like yesterday, I just like to do this because it's easier to see while you're carving and it gives a little bit more thickness to the lines, making them easier to carve. And you'll notice that often the soft cut comes with kind of a powdery surface on it, so you might need to just wipe your Sharpie off a little bit. And you can also, before you start using this material, just give it a wipe-down. And just keep tracing the outline. And you might notice that it gets a little bit smudgy, or the block gets a little bit dirty. Don't worry about that, we'll be carving away the surface anyway, so you can worry about that later. Next, we're gonna start carving. So you have the same image twice. And with one we're going to carve out the actual image and with one we're going to carve out the background of the image. And in this exercise, you'll see the difference and the different techniques you can use for positive and negative space. For this, I'm going to use a combination of the two smaller tools, so number one and number two. And we're gonna do the same process that we did yesterday. So just carving out along the line. And you can test how thick you want those lines to be. So here, with the first tool, I'm getting a really thin line. And then if you'd like to, you can make a little bit of a thicker line. You'll get a bolder impression when you're printing. So, just going over that. So you can choose how thick you want the line. I like the slightly thicker line, just because it shows up a little bit better after you print it. And then just carve away everywhere that you see the Sharpie. And then you can take your next block. And using either the one or two tool, again. This time, you're gonna carve away everything that doesn't have Sharpie on it. So we're gonna leave the Sharpie image where it is. So this time, you wanna carve next to the Sharpie, just like that. And this will take slightly longer. So you're carving around. Okay, so now that you have the outline done, you can carve away the smaller details. So just take your time and don't worry if you make mistakes. This is just a test print. So just take it slowly, especially around the curves. And you can see, on little parts like this where you want the line to get wider, I put the tool right there, start softly, and then

add more pressure and you'll get a line that gets wider as you go. And if your knife slips, just pay attention to when that happens. Sometimes there are certain shapes or lines that cause the knife to slip more. And when you learn what causes that, you can prevent it on the next block. And if this tool feels too wide, if you want more detail, you can go back in with the smaller tool, the number one, and use that instead. This is just a test, so it doesn't have to be really precise. Don't worry if you make a mistake or if you slip. Now we're using the slightly wider tool just to go back in and we're gonna start carving away the whole background. And when you're carving the background, I always like to keep these strokes going away from the main image. This is definitely a part of the process where the knife can slip really easily. And often you're not holding it as tightly or being as precise as with the detail. I always try and keep the strokes going away from the main image so that I don't accidentally slip and cut through the image. And then as you carve around, you'll see that you get little bumps around the main image. And sometimes those can pick up and can print, so I just try and go back over and smooth those out a little bit. It doesn't have to be completely smooth, but the larger ones right next to your image you can go back in and just take those away. You don't have to be too precise with getting rid of those. You can come back in and clean it up once you start printing, as well. And here we have the finished blocks. There's one with a negative carving and one with a positive carving. And you'll be able to see the difference between the printing when we get to that step.

Day 4 - Test printing

- Today we're gonna start printing the blocks that we've carved so far. So, we are going to start with the Safe Wash ink, and we have our plexiglass that we're gonna use to roll out the ink. You'll need your brayer, and then the baren or the spoon. So, to get started with printing, open this up, you're gonna squeeze a little bit of this ink, not too much, but you want enough so that your roller can roll it out. And you wanna get a nice even spread of ink, so just kind of warm it up, roll it around a little bit. (squishing and hissing) And you'll hear that hissing sound. That means you have the right amount. You don't want it to be too sticky or too much ink. It'll start to drag. And you don't wanna have too little ink. You won't hear that noise. So you're looking for that nice roll, and once you have this even square of ink, you're ready to start rolling onto the surface. We're gonna start with this block, the Soft-Kut. So there are two ways that you can print this. I'm gonna start with, this is just an 8 1/2 x 11 french paper. You can use printer paper or any smooth printmaking paper. You wanna stay away from watercolor paper, anything with a lot of texture in it, or you won't be able to get a smooth, clean print. So, you can either print your block on top of the paper, or your paper on top of the block, and one of the things I love about printmaking is that there isn't really a right or wrong way to do it. You can play around and see what works better for you and how you get the cleanest print. You might find that you prefer putting the block on the paper because you have more control over it. Or you might find that you get a cleaner print if you do it this way. So I encourage you to try a little bit. You're definitely gonna get some bad prints at this stage, and that is perfectly fine. That's what we want, because it helps you experiment and see what works for you. So when you're ready to start, take your block (hissing). So you wanna get even coverage over the whole surface of the roller. And then you take your block and just smoothly roll on the ink. (squishing) And you can go over it a few times, and you can just even it out. (squishing) Make sure the whole surface is covered. And you'll see, sometimes you get little pieces of dust or pieces of ink in there. You can just pull those out. If you leave those on you might see little blemishes on your print, so just pull those out. And again, if your block is not perfect, don't worry. You can see I have a little nick right there, and

this is just a test to get comfortable with the material. So we're not looking for a perfect art print. So, we're gonna start by printing the block facing up. So put that there. And later on we're gonna get into registration and how to line up your print with your paper, but since we're just testing, you can just feel free to put your paper down. And I like to rest the paper on there and just with my hands give it a little bit (rubbing) of pressure, and that will stop it from slipping. And so now we have our baren and our spoon, and you don't need to give too much pressure on the Soft-Kut material since it's very smooth. (rubbing) Just rub it in circular motions, and you can be pretty gentle. You don't wanna go too hard or you'll slip the block and you might end up smudging your print. Just make sure you're covering every surface. You'll start to see the print through the paper, and that means you're getting a good transfer. And if you don't have one of these, and you wanted to just use the spoon, you can get a similar technique with the back of the spoon. So just gently apply pressure with the spoon. (light rubbing) Okay, now we are ready to peel our first print. So, in one smooth motion you just pull back, and there you go. And just to show you how it looks different or feels different, we can try the same technique, but we're gonna put the block on top of the paper. And both are fine to do, whichever you're more comfortable with. The point is to get a clean print, so however you need to arrange your printing setup to do that, as long as you're getting a clean print then you're doing it right. So roll out the ink again (hissing), and you're looking for a nice smooth coating, and then this time we're gonna take our paper, and put the block on top like that. And you can just push down. It's not gonna slide as much on the surface of the block, but just give it some pressure. And it will look a little bit different. You might like it, or you might prefer the look of the first print. Can do that. You can push down with your hands. (light squishing) So just pull off your block. There you go. This will take overnight to dry, so you can put this to the side, and the Soft-Kut that we just printed is the easiest to print and get a clean impression without a printing press. So that's what we're gonna stick with for the rest of this class. But we're gonna test print these other types of linoleum just so you can see the difference and see what you prefer printing with. If you like printing with a harder linoleum like the Battleship Gray or the Golden Cut, they print better often on a printing press. So if you have access to one, if you'd like to rent a studio space, those are great options for that. And this Soft-Kut doesn't print that well on a printing press. It's a little bit too soft for the pressure of the press. So if you wanna print on a press, I would not recommend using the Soft-Kut. You can switch to one of these harder linoleums, but this is what we're gonna use for this class. So next we're just gonna test out this Golden Cut. (hissing) So do the same thing. You wanna make sure you don't have any dust or anything on your block, and roll out the ink. (squishing and hissing) And you can see the difference already. It's a different texture on the surface, and even though we use the same carving tool for all four of these, the lines are thinner on this one than they were on the Soft-Kut. And then you take your paper, (rubbing) give it a little rub with your hands, just so it doesn't slip, and then you can take your baren, (rubbing) and like I said before, this is a much harder linoleum, so we're not gonna get as crisp of a print on this one. (rubbing) One trick that I like to use if you'd like to get a crisp print on this linoleum without having a printing press is that you can put it on the floor and stand on it. That's one option. Or you just give it pressure with this. So now (paper rustling). And you can see the texture of the background is different with this linoleum. And for certain projects you might really like that. You might want a really textured linoleum, so it's nice to have these different options. And put this to the side. And now we are gonna print the Wonder-Cut. (hissing) So just roll out an even layer. And if you need a little bit more ink, you can just add a little, (hissing) roll that out and combine it with the rest of your ink. (hissing) And again you'll notice this one is different than the other two that we used. So this

has a lot more grain on the surface, so you're gonna get a grainier print. (hissing) And you might like that texture, you might hate that texture, so just keep in mind that the different materials will give you very different effects. You're gonna take your paper (rubbing), lay it on top (rubbing). Take your baren (rubbing), and this linoleum will need more pressure than the Soft-Kut does, so you can push down harder on that. (rubbing) Peel it off. And you can see we get a super grainy print. And if you have a printing press or you're able to apply more pressure to that, you'll get less grain, and you might end up thinking I have a project that that would look really great. So that would be a good linoleum for that. And the last one is the mounted linoleum (hissing). This is similar to the Golden Cut. It has a similar texture. But the mounting sometimes, you'll notice, that it makes a difference with the way that it prints. And this is a good one also, to print face down if you want to do that. We're just gonna print it face up, so it's consistent with the rest of our blocks. But the mounting makes it nice if you are printing a repeat, or doing a lot of different prints by hand. Sometimes you might like that. And again, just experiment with these materials, because you never know quite how it's gonna turn out. So take your paper (rubbing), smooth that out, and you wanna be really careful with all of these that you're not sliding the paper over the block, or you'll end up with a smudged print. And if you do, that is okay. I always end up with smudged prints. It's just part of printmaking. You can make something out of it later if you want to. Okay (paper rustling)... There we go. And you can get less grain in this if you put more pressure on. So if you have a printing press or you wanna stand on it, or you have another way of applying a lot of pressure to this block, you'll get a much smoother print. If you'd like to, now you can print the block from day one where we made the different marks. And if you need to put a little bit more ink on your plate, then do that. (hissing) And since this is the Wonder-Cut, it's gonna be a little bit grainier. But you can see as you roll the ink on, all those different marks that you made on the first day. (hissing and rolling) You can see here how the pressure that you applied makes it look different, and also the fine lines, how they pick up ink differently than the thicker lines. So that's helpful to see when you're planning out future prints. Take your paper. (rubbing) And since this is the Wonder-Cut, we're gonna want to apply more pressure than we did on the Soft-Kut. (rubbing) And it's gonna be a grainy print because of the linoleum that we used. (paper rustling) There we go. You can see the different marks that you made. Lastly, we're gonna print the two positive and negative blocks that we just carved. And we'll print those on the same piece of paper so that we can see the difference. So take one of those (hissing)... Roll your ink on. You won't need much because there's not much printing surface on this block. We carved most of it away. And you can see here, that some of these lines are picking up ink, and that's okay. Some people like leaving more lines in the backgrounds of their prints. At this stage you can use the tool again to carve that away, but for this print we're just gonna leave it and see how the original carving that we made turns out. (hissing) Okay. You're gonna take your paper and put it on one side, so we can print both on the same piece. And just lightly again, give a little bit of pressure so it doesn't slip around. (rubbing) And we're back to the Soft-Kut, so you don't need to print or press super hard. (rubbing) Just give a little pressure, and you'll start to see the image come through faintly on your paper. And then carefully, in a smooth motion, (paper rustling) just pull it off. And we're going to print the twin of that one. So take your other block (hissing), pick up your roller (rolling and hissing), and you can see where the ink is not very even. These cloudy parts, you just wanna go over that multiple times, and make sure that you have a solid field of ink there. (hissing and rolling) (clanking) Take the same piece and on the other side, so that your two prints are next to each other (rubbing), just place that there. Give it a little pressure with your hand (rubbing), and then do the same with the baren. And again, if your prints are sliding around, just try

giving it a little bit of a smoother pressure, and just keep experimenting with it. You're always gonna get a different result, so just keep trying a slightly different technique. And we're gonna peel this off. (paper rustling) Now that you've test printed each of your linoleums, you can see the difference between them and how you can get different textures with the different types of materials. So hopefully you've found one that you like. The Soft-Kut is definitely the easiest, so we'll be moving forward with that, and this will give you a better idea of what we'll be working towards. And now we're gonna learn to clean up. I've got my gloves on and I put the cap back on the ink. So the next step is we're gonna take this razor scraper, put your roller off to the side, and you'll just scrape the ink off your plexi. And if you have more printing to do that day, you can just collect the ink and reuse this, or if you're done for the day you can wipe this onto a piece of paper and throw it in the trash. (clicking and scraping) I'll just take a piece of scrap paper here, wipe off the ink, and if you're not saving it for later this can just get folded up. You don't need to reuse that. And then I usually wash this with dish soap and warm water over the sink. I'll just take a soapy rag and wipe off the ink from the roller. And this oil-based ink won't come off just with water, so you need the dish soap as well. We're just gonna rub this with the soapy rag, and get the majority of the ink off like this. (rubbing and clicking) And you'll be able to get it pretty clean, and then once it's mostly clean, you can take it over to the sink and just rinse off this excess. And then we will do the same with the razor, just wipe that off. And then you can get most of the ink off your plexiglass here. And once you've got most of it off, you can rinse that under the sink, too. And then when you're cleaning your block, you want to make sure that you're not being too rough with it, because you can end up ruining some of the carving. So you wanna be really gentle. And you're not gonna get it back to what it looked like before you printed. It will be stained somewhat by the ink. So you're not trying to get it clean, per se, just get off the wet ink. (rubbing) And then once you have the majority of that wet ink off, you can take a dry rag, and just dry off your surface. (rubbing) And again, you're just trying to get the majority of the ink off. It's not gonna be completely clean, because the material is stained by the black ink. But, if you can get most of it off, and then just make sure it's dry before you put it away so it doesn't damage the block. Now that you've learned to print, we're going to revisit the process with designing your own block from the initial design, to carving, to coming back to printing again.

Day 5 - Creating block designs

- Now that you've seen the whole process, we're gonna start with a new block where you can design your own imagery. So today, I will talk you through a little bit about what works and what doesn't when you're creating your own image for the block. I've traced my block so I have a five by seven outline here, and that is the area that I'm gonna be working inside. So, a few things to think about when you're creating your imagery. The number one thing to remember is that your imagery is going to be a mirror image when you print it. So anything that you draw is gonna come out backwards after it's printed. So that's really important to remember if you have an image that has text in it, which we'll get to later in this daily challenge, or if you have an image that needs to be a certain way, you need to remember to flip that image before you draw it on your block. And then, another thing to think about is that you don't want to make any lines that are too thin. As you saw with the printing process, really thin lines can get kind of blurry when they're printed, so make sure that you're sticking, when you're just starting out, you're sticking to a thicker line or a more bold image. The last thing to remember is that you don't want to leave large areas of uncarved space in the middle of your block. As you saw, when you put pressure down, you're pushing down on the

whole block, so if you have an empty space in the middle, that will end up being compressed onto the paper and you'll get a lot of background noise. Of course, if that's what you're going for, then that's okay. As with all parts of this process, all of these rules are made to be broken. So if you come up with an image and you think this is gonna look really good with a big, negative space in the middle, and I want to give that a try, feel free, because you might come up with something that looks really cool, even if it's not the way that it's supposed to be done. So, as I'm starting to draw out my image, I'm trying to use as much of the block as possible. I think, personally I think that these carvings look better when you fill the page as much as you can, and you'll often get a cleaner print. So I'm trying to work with the whole space that I've been given. I work with florals all the time and I love drawing them, so that's what I'm choosing today. But if there is an image that you respond to, or that you like to draw, you can feel free to work with that. And I just like to fill as many of these little gaps as possible. For this block, we're gonna be working with positive imagery. So anything that you want to have in your image needs to stay within this five by seven rectangle. And you can have your shapes touching, if you'd like. If you do an overlap, let's say you want something like this, you can either carve both of these lines out, or you can choose that one will overlap the other, and you can indicate that to yourself by sketching in, if you'd like to. And just choose whatever method is comfortable for you for telling yourself where you're gonna carve once this is transferred onto the block. And you can go right up to the edge if you'd like, but make sure that everything you're drawing is contained within that five by seven space. As you're sketching this out, this is just our initial sketch, so feel free to make mistakes and erase if you want. We're gonna go over this again before we put it onto our block. And this is just our first time trying your own imagery, so don't worry about it being perfect. You just want to fill a space with any imagery that you respond to, and we're gonna work with that. One thing to think about when you are creating your block is that you don't want large areas of positive space or negative space, because that will lead to a lot more inconsistencies in the printing process. So sometimes I like to add little details in, like the lines in the flowers, you can add lines in the leaves, and that just makes the actual surface area that you're printing a little bit smaller. It makes it easier to print and you'll end up with a cleaner print. Another thing to remember is that since this is our first block, you want to keep the imagery somewhat simple. So if you're working from a reference photo, don't try to copy anything too precisely. Don't try to make something super complicated for this first block. So choose a simple image. Things that work well are organic shapes. You could do a silhouette. You could do something very simple, just so that you don't get too much detail on this first block. I encourage you to use your own art for this step, but if you're not ready for that, we do have a PDF for you that you can work from, and this is the image that I'll be working from for the rest of this block. The transfer method that we'll be using tomorrow will work just as well with your own image as it will with this PDF.

Day 6 - Transferring block images

- We're gonna transfer our image using a new method using tracing paper to get the drawing that you just created onto your block. I'm using a regular sheet of tracing paper and I'll put that down over my image. And I like to do a little crop mark in the corner so I start by just doing little marks so that if your paper slides around, you can find right where you were tracing. We're gonna trace the image that we drew yesterday and if you made mistakes yesterday or there's anything that you wanna change at this point, just don't trace that onto your tracing paper. Anything that's on your tracing paper is gonna be the final image that we transfer onto the block. Just go over it pretty hard with the pencil. You wanna press down and get a nice impression so that we can transfer onto the

block. Next, we're gonna take our tracing paper, so we're finished with the original drawing, and you wanna put it face down on top of the soft cut block. I like to line the little corner marks up roughly with the corner of your block. And you wanna make sure it's face down so that the pencil marks are touching the block. And then you're gonna do the same transfer method we did before. So you can use a pencil. You can also use a hard surface like the edge of a pen or the edge of a spoon, just something that will press down on the block. Because we have the little corner marks, if you want to, you can pull up your tracing paper and just make sure that it's transferring properly and just make sure you're holding it when you do that. Then just go over all of these pencil lines. You'll see that you get a much nicer transfer from the tracing paper than you did when you were just transferring it from the printer paper. If you feel comfortable just free hand transferring, just copying your image from your initial drawing onto the block without transferring it, I recommend doing that in a ballpoint pen. Sometimes it can be hard to draw on this surface with pencil, especially if your pencil is sharp. It might start to carve the surface a little bit. So you wanna use a soft material on the block if you're free hand drawing. You can check again if you want, just to make sure everything's transferring. When you're done, just take that off and you should have a nice image on your block. Even though we have a really nice transfer here and you can see the image really clearly, I recommend going over it with a Sharpie or a permanent marker of some kind because once you start carving and your hand is rubbing against the block, you'll start to smudge this pencil. It's nice to have the Sharpie line that won't smudge while you're carving. And similarly to before, you might need to wipe your Sharpie off a little bit as you're drawing on the soft cut. So if you need to do that, just wipe off the tip and then keep drawing. I like to use a Sharpie that's not too thick, one that's about the same width as the carving tool that I'm gonna be using and that will give you a nice guide for where to carve. You can see, as I'm drawing, that the pencil is smudging a little bit, so don't worry if the surface is getting messy, as long as you can see your design in Sharpie. Now that you have your final sketch ready, you can see that if you use the tracing paper method, you've ended up with a mirror image of your original sketch. That means when you print your block, you will get the same image as your original sketch. If you chose to free hand your image onto the block, you will end up with a mirror image of your original sketch.

Day 7 - Carving detail

- Today we're gonna carve out the small details from our block that we sketched out yesterday. And now that we have our imagery drawn out, we're gonna use a little bit of a combination of the positive and negative carving techniques that we learned already. So for this block, I'm going to leave some negative space on the flowers. And then the leaves, I'm gonna carve out the background. And you'll see how I do that as we carve away the details. So, I'm going to use tools one and two today. So the two smaller tools. And I like to start with the smaller details first because they're more complex. They usually take longer. And there's a higher chance that you're gonna make a mistake with the smaller details. So sometimes it's nice to get the harder part out of the way first. That way, if you make a huge mistake, you haven't ruined all of your work. So I like to start with a small detail. And I'm just gonna work through the block with the smaller tool. And you can just shift the block as you go. So I like to start with the smallest blade first and get all the detail done. And then after we have the details carved out, we're gonna go around it with the number two tool. Just to make sure we have a deep enough impression for printing. And this is definitely a slower part of the process, so take your time on these little details. This is where you really want to have precise cuts. And you can see if you have little pieces that aren't smooth you can just go back and

fix those. I'm just gonna worry about the shapes and doing the details. I'm not worried about the background right now. And you can make little changes along the way if you like. Some people like to use the Sharpie as an exact guide and follow it precisely. And other people like to make changes as they go, as they get a feel for the block. So you can decide what you wanna do. I usually follow the Sharpie pretty closely, but then I'll make little edits. Right here I might add a little extra line if I want to. So you don't have to be too precise with what you drew originally. And now, here I used the negative carve out for the flower because I wanted the petal to be printed dark with the ink. And here for the leaf, I'm gonna carve around it because I want the leaf to be printed. And this is something that you can plan out as you're designing your block. And as we learned in the negative versus positive space day, it'll look very different depending on what you decide to carve out and what you decide to leave behind. And just like before, you wanna keep your fingers behind the knife, and just rotate when you need to. You can see our pencil lines are getting all smudged, which is why it's nice to have the Sharpie there. Just carve out all these little details. And then as you're going, if you wanna make any changes, if you see a spot where you would like to add anything, I just like to keep the Sharpie nearby. You can make changes as you go. So I think I'm just gonna add a little piece there. If I'm carving a lot of little lines next to each other, sometimes I'll just rest my middle finger on top of the knife there. That sometimes helps me carve a lot of little lines without the knife slipping out of my hand. You can just find a hand position that feels comfortable for you. Take a break from carving, and we'll finish the background of this piece tomorrow.

Day 8 - Background carving

- Now we're gonna carve out the background of our small block. So, I've got a wider range of carving tools and I also have my big Sharpie which we'll use at the end. So I like to start with the number two tool and I'm gonna just go around some of the detail that we carved out yesterday. Just starting to take away this negative space of the background. And you wanna be nice and careful when you're working close to the image. And this part can be a little tricky when you're working between these small areas, so just go slowly. And if you have a little shape like that that it's kind of a V shape. I like to carve with starting at the smaller point like that instead of trying to carve into a small detail that way. So you wanna stick with the shape of the carving tool. So, any time you can do a V that way, that will help you. So we'll rotate that and you'll put your carving tool right there in the smaller piece. And then we're just going over some of the same lines that we did yesterday just taking out that ground imagery. And I like to do that because you get a smoother print. You can see if you try and go straight with your big tool next to the image you start to lose some of that detail that you carved out yesterday. So I like to be a little bit more careful around the main image just going over it with a slightly smaller tool. And you can vary the tools that you're using a lot. That's why I recommend getting two sets of tools so that you can pick up two sizes back to back. Sometimes you might find that one of the carving tools fits better and it's nice if you don't have to be changing the blade every few minutes. And then when I have little pieces like this where the background detail is still there but you've carved around the edges, I'll take the biggest tool and just scoop that out. And if you make any big mistakes at this point, don't worry too much about it. We're gonna go over how to edit some of those mistakes as you're going. So if you make a huge mistake, just keep going. We can fix that. Keep carving the details around your outlines using the number two or the number three tool or whatever fits best in the little space that you're carving. Now that we're done carving the outlines, we're going to carve away all this background space and any of these little spaces that are in between your imagery. I'll be using the number three and

number five tools for this. So I'm gonna start with the three and just get rid of these little pieces in between the flowers. And then take the number five and just start doing the background. And like we did before, you wanna try not to carve towards the image. So if you can start in one of these corners and go out you're less likely to slip and take off a piece of what you've already carved. Now that you've carved your background away, it's a good time to check and make sure that all the details are exactly as you want them. So I like to take a big Sharpie and we're gonna just do a test draw over it and just make sure that everything is carved away. This will give you a good idea of what it's gonna look like once you're printing. So it's a good time to see if you've missed anything or if there's any details you need to remove before we get to the printing stage. Like right here you can see, now that there's Sharpie on there, I missed a little bit. So just go back in and clean up anything that you can see now that it's standing out more. Now that I have the Sharpie I can see that this leaf is bigger than I wanted it to be. So I'm just gonna go back in and just take a little bit more off of that. And then you can just look around and see if there's little pieces that maybe you missed or maybe you didn't get quite the right shape on the first go. And over here I have just some little pieces that are sticking up. And over here. And the Sharpie can help you just see everything as it's gonna print. So here we're gonna take away a little bit more. And you can go over it again if you want if there's parts that you're not quite sure. Now I can see that I took a little bit too much off this leaf right there. So I'm just gonna smooth that out a little bit. And you can do that if you want or you can print it and see if it works out or you can fix it now. Keep editing your block until you're happy with the way the image looks, and tomorrow we're gonna look at some other ways to troubleshoot while you're carving.

Day 9 - Fixing mistakes while carving

- I'm gonna show you today how to fix some mistakes while you're carving. So, I have this pre-made block with a couple of mistakes that I've set up. And one of the things that I want to teach you is how to stay calm if you make a mistake. There are usually ways to fix it. I'll show you some ways that the knife could slip. So, just to make it easier to see here, I've got the black image of what's carved, and then in white is what I was intending to carve. So, here you can see I was trying to carve this leaf like that, and the knife slipped and went around. So, one of the things that's important to be able to do while you're carving is to edit on the go because you don't want to throw away your whole carving if you make a little mistake like this, and that happens all the time. I make little mistakes like that all the time, and one of the best things that you can do is to figure out ways to quickly change as you're going. So, for example, now I have this angle on the leaf. I want to just bring it up there, and then I'll probably edit the other side too, just so it matches. And that way it will look intentional. You'll never know that I slipped and wasn't able to get the shape that I wanted. So I'll just go ahead and carve that. And then do the same on the other side. And, when that's printed, you won't know that there was a mistake there. I'll just keep cleaning up this part where we fixed the mistake, taking away the original carving. And you won't be able to tell that you changed the design as you were going. So we carved out the background. You can take your Sharpie, just color over what used to be there, and keep going with that new design. Then, down here, we have a flower where I wanted all of the petals to be the same size, when I accidentally made one big one. So we're gonna edit this design a little bit to make that work. So we'll keep, maybe we'll keep this edge, make two petals up here, and now we have this line going off the top. So maybe you can edit your design to incorporate that. And so, that's something that I do a lot as I'm working. Sometimes you'll make a mistake, and you'll think the only way I can fix that is by adding a new piece to this

carving. Sometimes that's how you end up with an interesting idea. So, instead of giving up and throwing that away, just try fixing it first. See if you can come up with something that will look like you intended to put it there from the beginning. So we'll take away that, and then we'll add a little detail here to cover our mistake. If I make a mistake on a block, I'm always looking to see if there's a way that I can salvage the work that I've already done. So it's always a last resort for me to throw the whole thing away. Sometimes it does happen, if you make a huge mistake, or if you're carving text and you make a mistake, it's a lot harder to fix that. But I always try and look for a way that I can make a design out of the mistake itself. Something like that. And carve away the rest of this piece there, when my hand slipped before. And now you've got a new design that maybe you weren't intending to make originally, but it could be something nice that you end up with. And over here we have a leaf. Let's say I'd wanted to put another leaf here, but I carved out there without thinking. This is something that happens all the time while you're carving. You'll be working on one piece of the design, carve away something that you needed to save for later. And you can't add anything back in, so now we need to think of a way to make that part of the design. So, maybe on this one I'll end up replicating that. I'll carve away all of those pieces and maybe add a line here to make that look intentional. So just do something that makes it look like you wanted that mistake to be there from the beginning. And, if you can start getting comfortable with this, of thinking about your design in a more flexible way, you'll end up getting a lot less frustrated while you're doing printmaking, and you might end up with something that you weren't expecting, but you like it just as much. And you can take your Sharpie, go over it and maybe you'll like how that looks. Maybe you don't like it, maybe you want to end up throwing the block away anyway, but at least you gave it a try to fix it. And, similarly up here, we can do the same thing. Carve out here. Up here, you can see there's a flower where I went too far. My knife slipped, and I chopped the edge off of that leaf. So I can make this one smaller. So, if you have any of the test blocks that we've been working on, and you slipped or you ended up with something that you don't like how it looks, you can try just editing the design a little bit. See if you can come up with a way to save that. Maybe I'll take a little bit more off there. On this one, you can see my knife slipped there, and there's no way to add this linoleum back in again. So now we have to decide what we're gonna do here. Maybe I'll decide to carve out all of the triangles now and make that a negative space completely. Or, maybe you carve out the triangles and you think, oh no, I have a mistake over here, and I don't like how that looks. Maybe we should carve out that whole area and do a larger piece of negative space. Maybe we'll add the border next to them. So, just be ready to think flexibly about the design. One of the hardest parts about carving out your design is that you want to get really attached to this image that you have in your head that you really like, and sometimes it can be hard to do that because it's not carving well, or you make a big mistake. So it's important to be able to stay flexible, try and edit on the go. And maybe this will work just as well with your original design as the triangles would have. As you're carving and working on your design, just try and stay flexible and be able to edit as you go, and not get too attached to the image that you're working on.

Day 10 - Printing a linoleum block

- Today we're gonna print our first original block. So you have the block with your own imagery on it. We're going to do just exactly the same process as before. You can roll out your ink. Make sure you have a nice smooth coating on the roller. And as you get comfortable printing, you'll start to know when you've got too much ink on there or not enough ink. For this print, we're gonna use a registration mark. So you take the size of paper that you want. You can lay it down. And then I like

to just mark out the corners. And this will help you if you're doing multiple prints and you want the same layout for each one. This will help you get a really easy registration mark. So if you just do opposite corners and then take your inked block and put it down in the middle of your space, and then you can mark that out too. And then you can just easily put the block in the same place each time. So now we're ready, we have our inked block, and we have our registration marks for the paper. So you're gonna take your paper. Position the paper on top of the block with the corners at the registration marks. And you're gonna gently rub the back of the paper, just to prevent it from slipping. And then you take your baren. And since we're working with the Soft-Kut again, you don't need to give it too much pressure, just like before. And you wanna make sure that your hands are somewhat clean when you pull up the paper so you're not leaving fingerprints. So you can give them a wipe. You can use a baby wipe or just wipe them on a paper towel. And then you're ready to peel your print. So registration is helpful because it allows you to put the paper down exactly in the same place and have the block in the same position on the paper each time. So if you're making a run of more than one print and you want them all to be centered in the exact same place on the paper, these registration marks will help you achieve that. So we're gonna print just a couple more with the same block. And you'll get to see how even if you're printing with the same ink on the same block on the same paper, you might end up with slight differences. So you can try making little edits if you want. You can use less ink, or you can use more ink, or you can just do it exactly the same way, and you might end up with something different. Press down lightly. And then with the baren, you're just gonna do exactly the same method. And one of the things that I really like about oil-based ink is that it's a little bit less slippery than water-based ink, so you can get a cleaner print. So we'll pull that off. And you can compare it to your first print. I'm gonna do another print. This time I'm gonna use a little bit less ink, just to look at the variation in how you can print. Make sure your block is on the registration marks. And put your paper down. Press it on gently. And then peel it off. These are all three of our finished prints, and you can see that even though they're all the same and they're all positioned in the same way on the paper, there are small differences between each one. So over here, there's a little bit more texture on the flower. On this one, we picked up a little bit more of the background noise. There's more texture in the background. And there's texture over here on the flower. So that'll happen on, every print is gonna look a little bit different, and that is just part of the process. And tomorrow, we're gonna talk a little bit about cleaning it up now that we're finished. Now that we have little mistakes around here, we can go back in and clean that up.

Day 11 - Fixing mistakes after carving

- Here we have our third print from yesterday. So we're gonna take a look at this and just see some of the mistakes or extra pieces of linoleum that didn't get carved away, and we can carve away a little bit more from this block just to clean it up a little bit. Over here I see a little piece that didn't get carved away, so I'm gonna take one of my tools, I'm gonna use the number two, and just go in and take a little bit more out. And just be careful because this block is either still wet, if you just printed with it, or it's still got ink on it from yesterday. So try not to lean too hard on the block. And then just go around your print, and you can see little pieces that you might wanna take away a tiny bit more. And you don't have to. If you like the way this looks, you can leave whatever you want. But if you see little pieces that you don't like, this is a good time to just go in and clean it up a little bit. And remember that it's a mirror image, so whatever you see on the right side of your print will be on the left side of your block. So I'm just gonna go in there and take a little bit away. And down here. And just try and match up what's on your print to what you see on the block. And some of

them are really small. You can see a tiny little mark right there. So if you want, you can go in and clean that up. It depends how clean you would like your final print to be. If you want something a little bit rougher, it's completely fine to leave more of these, but if you want a really clean print, this is a good time to go back in and just make any edits. And then, if you wanna make a bigger change, let's say I wanna take away a piece of this leaf, I think it's too big, so you can go in here, very carefully, try not to slip at all at this stage, and just take a little bit more off there. And again, my block still has ink on it, so just be careful. Just gonna make that a little thinner. And any edits like that, where you say, "I think this stem is a little wide, "I want it to be smaller," this is a good time to do that. And I keep a paper towel or a rag, or a baby wipe, whatever you need, handy. And you can keep your tool clean and keep your hands clean, so you're not transferring too much ink off of this wet block. Now we'll print that block again. So just exactly the same way as yesterday. So here is your final print, and if we compare it to the one from before, you can see that there's a lot less marking going on in the background. And there is still some in here, so if you want to, you can go back in and clean it up one more time, or if you think it looks good with a little bit of background noise, this can be your final print.

Day 12 - Sketching a negative image

- Today we're gonna work with another negative space image, and I'm gonna show you another way to draw on the block. So we're gonna be drawing directly onto the linoleum today. And one way I like to do that is by coloring in the background black. So you can take one of your big Sharpies, and I've already done it for you, so you're just gonna color the whole thing black, and it will look like this. And then, for this project, we're gonna work in white ink. So I'm using a Uniball Signo pen in white, and one thing I love about this is that when you're freehanding, you're definitely gonna make a lot of mistakes. So you can just start drawing, and then you think, "Oh, I don't like that." You can just go over it with a Sharpie and you're basically starting from scratch. So that's different from drawing on the gray block, where you can't erase off of the linoleum. This is a good way of getting back to a blank slate. And I like drawing straight on the block a lot of the time, because it lets you work with the material, and it's a little bit more organic, and it helps me kind of edit as I go when I'm carving as well, so I don't get too attached to the image initially. Today we're gonna do a line drawing on here, and you're just gonna carve out the negative space of the lines, so keep it really simple. And you're just gonna work with the white pen. As you go, feel free to erase it with the black marker. So keep it really loose. And you can edit as needed. And the finished carving is going to look similar to the one that we've already done where we carved out the leaf shape from a solid background. But this is just helping to get used to drawing straight on the block, which is one of my favorite ways to come up with new designs. And if you're nervous about doing this, you can definitely sketch out some ideas before. You can use a scrap paper to just kind of help you think about how you'd like to fill the paper. And then maybe copy that. But it's nice to work directly on the linoleum sometimes. And as you go, if you make a mistake, you don't like that anymore, just color over it and you have a blank piece again. And this is a way, also, that I like to use other pieces of linoleum that I've started on, if I've maybe been transferring an image and I've made a mistake, and it is too messy to use again, I'll just color the whole thing and then I can restart. And you'll see the pen gets a little bit clogged up, like it was with the Sharpie, so just wipe off the tip. And you can reuse it. So I'm just gonna keep filling the space. I'm gonna go right up to the edge, but staying a little bit away from it, just because we want to have a little border when we're printing negative space. But again, that is a rule that you are free to break if you come up with a design that would look really good going off the side, you

can feel free to try that. Keep filling in your block, and sketching out all the negative space that you have there. And I encourage you to come up with your own imagery and experiment with this block, since it's so easy to erase with the black pen. Definitely try some new imagery on there. If you're not ready for that yet, we have a five by seven PDF that you can transfer, and just try copying it if you're comfortable with that, you can use this imagery.

Day 13 - Carving a negative image

- I finished drawing the block from yesterday, so I have filled the whole block with a line drawing. And now we're ready to start carving. I've already started carving some of this block. So we're just going to follow the white lines that we've drawn on here, just using our smallest number one size tool. And the nice thing, again, about this is that you can edit the drawing really easily as you go. So just like in the section where we were fixing mistakes on our block, this is a good time to be able to edit that if you slip or if you make a mistake. It's really easy to go back over it with a black pen and just figure out where you wanna put a new line. So if I make a mistake, I just color it in, and I can revisit that if I want to. And these are gonna be fairly delicate lines, so you wanna give a good amount of pressure. You wanna make sure you're not too light, otherwise you won't get enough of a groove to avoid putting ink in there. Just keep working through those details. Again, we're working just with a line drawing, but the rules are there to be broken, so if you feel like you wanna take out a section or do some more negative space, feel free to edit this into your own artwork. Once you've carved out all the details, you can take your big Sharpie again and just go over what you've already carved. Just make sure that all of the details that you'd like to take out are carved away. And then if you missed anything, you can go back in and make some edits before we start printing.

Day 14 - Printing a negative image

- We are going to print our negative space block. So I've already got the registrations marks set up. I have my black ink ready to go. And we're just gonna do the exact same process that we did before. Just get a nice even roll of the ink. And you won't be able to see it as well on this because the background is already black. So you're just gonna try and look carefully for the texture of the ink. You'll be able to see that it's got little bumps on it, and that's what you're looking for. It's shiny. So you wanna see that consistent shiny texture all over the block, and that's how you'll know that it's ready to print. And when you're ready and your block is inked up, you can put your paper down on your registration marks. Give it a little pressure to keep it in place. And then exactly the same way as before, you use your baren. And you'll start to see that image come through. And sometimes when you're working with a negative image like this, you need to give it a little bit more pressure, so slightly more than you did for the last block. And then you're ready to peel it off. Here is your finished negative print, and it came out really well. There's a couple things that I might change. There's a little bit at the top where it didn't print completely, so I could've put a little bit more pressure on up there. And then you can see just a couple of places where you could clean up the block a little bit. Maybe you wanna go back now and make a few edits. And you can print it again. If you're happy with it and you don't wanna make any changes to the block, then just leave it as is, and you can print more and do a larger print run.

Day 15 - Carving a geometric block

- For today's project, we're gonna be working on a larger piece of paper, and we're gonna be preparing a repeat print. So we're gonna work with a small block that's gonna be printed multiple

times on the same piece of paper. We're gonna use a geometric pattern for this one, and we're gonna sketch freehand directly onto the block. We're going to draw some horizontal lines on our block, and that is gonna be our guide. I'm using a ballpoint pen instead of a pencil because it's softer, and it won't accidentally carve away your material, and we're gonna be using this block as a repeat, so the lines on either side of the block will line up with each other, when the piece is printed, and then we're also going to leave a tiny little bit of a border on this block, so that we can use that almost as a handle, so just draw a vertical line, about 1/4-inch from the edge on each side of your block. So on previous blocks, we stayed within the lines of the block, and we didn't wanna carve right up to the edge. For this, because we're carving a repeat, we're gonna go off the edge of the block, so you can take your pattern right up to the edge. So for this block, I'm just gonna do a variety of marks, and you can keep drawing with your ballpoint pen, or you can switch over to the Sharpie if you're ready to make thicker lines directly onto your block, and as I'm drawing, it's definitely okay to edit as you go, so if you make a mistake, just find a way that you can tell yourself what pattern you actually would like to carve, and you can redo the lines as you want. Now that you have your drawing, you're ready to start carving, so just like we did before, I like to start with my smallest carving tool, and work on the details first. To get a straight line, I like to do a continuous pressure going away from you, and sometimes you'll need to stop in the middle of a line. You can just put the blade back in the same groove, and use the same pressure, and continue that straight line. So I'm carving just around this border with my small tool, and then I'm gonna take my largest tool and just take away some of that border, and when we're printing the repeat, we're gonna use this little border almost like a handle to hold onto our block without touching the actual image. Just keep working through the details. While you're carving, if you wanna check what you've carved, you can grab your Sharpie, and just go over where you've already carved away, and that's helpful, also, if you've made edits, you can see what you've finally ended up with. When you've finished all the carving that you wanna do, you can just go over the whole thing with your Sharpie, and see how you like the final design, so you can clean up the block a little bit if you see little pieces that need to be carved away, this is a good time to do that, and then also, if you wanna add any little details, you can see now what your final print is gonna look like, so this is a good time to make little edits before we get to the printing phase. There, I'm happy with that.

Day 16 - Printing a repeat

- We're gonna move on now to printing on a larger piece of paper. So for this, we are gonna use a Canson PrintMaKing Paper. And when you're at the art store, this comes in a big sheet, so you'll need to rip it down before you use it. And we wanna have something a little bigger than what we've been using so far so that we can print multiple repeats on the same sheet. So when you get the large piece of paper, you're gonna rip it down. And that way you'll maintain this deckled edge that it comes with. So an easy way to do that is to take a ruler and just lay it on your paper. You can mark out the size that you want before you rip. And then just put pressure on your ruler and rip your paper like that. And you'll get a nice deckled, rough edge on there. That's how you rip your paper down. And I'm going to work on an 11 by 14 sheet that I ripped down earlier. And for this project, you can work as big as you feel comfortable, or you can start at 11 by 14. I have my ink set up the same way as before. And for this project, we're going to keep the paper on the table and put the block on top of the paper so that we can see the repeat that we're working on. And so I'm gonna start by rolling out my ink. And again, getting a nice even coating on the roller. And then roll it onto my block. My block is inked. And I'm gonna start with my first print. And you wanna remember

which one is the top and which one is the bottom when you're starting to print. So just turn your block over. Lay that down and apply even pressure, just like we did before. Once you've applied even pressure all over your block, you can peel away the material. Then you wanna re-ink. Unless you're looking for a really big variation in texture, you'll wanna re-ink your block before each print. So put another even layer on there. And then when you're lining up your next block, remember which side is the top and which side is the bottom. And you're gonna hold it by these little handles that you've created on the side. And if you want, you can put guides on the back of your block that show you how far in your pattern starts, or you can just look at where you're placing it down. So you can line up this edge. And apply the same pressure. And peel back. You can see here that there's a gap between my two prints, which I wasn't going for, so I'm gonna take a pen and just mark on the back of my block. Just eyeball it like this. Mark where the edge of my print is. And that will help me line it up. And I'll do one horizontally too so that when I do the horizontal print, it will line up there. And that will be like a little crop mark on the back. I'm gonna ink the block again. Get it ready to print. And I'm gonna use those crop marks and just line it up. And apply the same pressure. And if you want a consistent print each time, just try and be consistent about how much pressure you're applying. And you'll see that this paper has a little bit more texture to it than what we were using before, so you'll get a little bit more texture in your print. And peel away. And then you can just keep going and fill your whole page just like that. This last print is upside down, so just pay attention to that as you're positioning your block. You can rotate it as you go, or you can keep it the same positioning each time. So for the next print, we're gonna go off the page. So I have a piece of scrap paper here. And you can just lay that down underneath. And we're just gonna print right up to the surface of the paper to make a consistent pattern. Now I'm gonna move the paper over. And just keep and part that has ink on it away from the underside of your paper. So you can just move it very slightly down each time so that you're not getting ink on the back of your art print. And then just keep printing until you've filled your whole page. So even though I made a couple of mistakes while I was printing with the alignment, I have this little white line here and then one of the pieces is upside down, I still really like how it came out. So if you end up making any mistakes while you're printing, just try and move through that and finish the piece, and you might end up really liking what you come up with. And you can see that there is a lot of variation in the texture, and that's one of the things that I love about this material. So you never quite know. You might get little lighter spots or some darker spots. And I really like how you can't predict what the final result is gonna look like.

Day 17 - Carving a letter

- Today we're gonna learn how to carve text. And so, in the past couple of lessons I've said it's easy to just sketch it out, it's okay if you make mistakes and you can edit as you go. And text is the one area where that doesn't really apply so we need to be much more careful this time with transferring our image and then when we're carving it. And I always, if I'm working on an image that has text and a pattern on it, I always do the text first because once you make a mistake on that there's not really a good way to fix it. So we're gonna be really careful about transferring our text. So we've provided a PDF with a K on it and you're welcome to use any font you want or any letter that you want. If you're printing one out, you can do it around a size 300 font to fit on a four by six block. So when you have your printout of your letter, you're going to take a piece of tracing paper and a pencil and just go around the edge of your letter. And if you'd like to draw your own letter, you can definitely do a freehand drawing of a letter on a piece of paper and then do this same transfer process instead of freehanding it onto the block. Then you're going to take your tracing paper and put it face down.

So as we've seen before, anything that you print is going to be a mirror image on your final piece and that's really important to remember with text. So make sure that you are adding your text onto the block backwards. And color over the back of it just like before. Even though we have a really clear image of this letter, I'm still gonna go over it with Sharpie just so that when we start carving and the pencil line starts to smudge I'll still have a clear image of where I wanna carve out. We're gonna start carving now. So, I'm gonna start with the smallest detail. I'm gonna use a combination of my one and two tools. And just be really careful with this. Like I said, once you slip and make a mistake, it's pretty hard to edit that with text since it's a recognizable image. Obviously, you can take a tiny bit more off if you make a tiny mistake you can do a little bit of a fix, but if you gouge out too much there's no way to bring that back, so just take it very slow and stay as close to the line that you drew as possible. And I'm gonna use this smaller number one just for this little corner so we can get a sharp corner there. And the smaller you make the text, the more complicated it gets. So it's nice to start practicing on a bigger letter like this, but you can work with any sized text. And again, I'll use the smaller tool on this corner. And if you do make a huge mistake and you need to start over, don't worry too much about that. I often restart text if I'm carving it. So just grab a new piece and try again. And then once you have your outline carved you can go in with the bigger tools and work away on the background. Carve out all the negative space around your letter and then if you have a letter like a B or a P that has negative space inside it, you can go in and carve that out as well. And once you have that background removed you can take your big Sharpie and just double check that you have everything carved away that you want. And then we'll go in and clean that up. And now with the Sharpie you can see little edges that might need a little bit of smoothing out. So just carefully go in and smooth out any lines that you need to. And then we're going to take a pair of scissors and cut around the letter so we're not carving out all of this negative space. Don't cut right next to your letter. You wanna leave a little bit of a border. And that's to help with printing so you have something to hold onto and also so that you don't accidentally chop off a piece of your carving. And then go back in with your large tool and just take out the remaining background.

Day 18 - Printing a letter

- We're going to print our letter today. So I've got the same setup as before. I have my ink on the plexiglass. I've laid out the registration marks here for an eight and a half by 11 sheet of paper with my K in the middle. So I'm going to get a nice thin, even coat of ink on this roller, roll it on to my letter. And you wanna check for the shiny ink all across the surface. And you take your paper, put a little pressure on the block, and then gently use the baren. And this is a really important moment when you're doing text. If you've carved it the right way, you should come out with a finished letter that is facing the right direction. Once you have your printed letter, hopefully it's facing the right way, and you'll notice that you might have a little bit of background noise here, and maybe some texture on the print that you don't want. And this look like it's from a little piece of dust on the ink. So I'm just gonna go back in and clean up the block a tiny bit. I'm gonna take out some of these marks with my carving tools. And be really careful at this step. You don't wanna slip and ruin your block after you've already printed it. And if you like a little bit of background texture, you don't have to take this out. But if you're looking for a cleaner print, you can remove these. And then I've got a little piece right there that I'm gonna try and get rid of. And it's better to leave a little bit extra than to take off too much, so don't go too crazy cleaning it up. And then I'll take that little piece of dust off. And you might find that you get little texture like that on your block sometimes. You can just go in and wipe it off if you need to. So I'm putting it back on the registration marks. I'll ink it up again.

Put a little pressure. And peel off your print. Once you have your print finished, you can keep going back in and making little edits as you need to. You can keep taking away more of the negative space, or you can just leave it as is!

Day 19 - Carving small florals

- Today we're going to start a project where we combine multiple blocks into the same finished piece. So we're going to start by carving some small leaf shapes, and we've provided this .pdf if you'd like to use it. Otherwise, you can just freehand leaves onto this four by six block, and that's what I'm gonna do today. I'm going to start with a ballpoint pen, again, and just freehand draw a leaf shape onto my block. You can come up with your own slight variation on this if you want, but we're going to keep these designs simple since we'll be combining them into one piece. Then you can use your Sharpie, if you like, to make those lines a little bit thicker. I'm just going to do that for the stem so that I know I want to keep that a bit wider when I carve it. And then I'm gonna start with my two small carving tools, the one and the two, and go around the outline. And we're gonna be taking away all this negative space and cutting out these blocks so that they're small. So you don't want to use a design that's heavily reliant on negative space. Before I cut out the background, I'm going to use my scissors and cut the shapes out. And I'm gonna leave about a quarter inch, you can leave a little bit more if you want, around the shape. And I'm gonna use that as my handle when I'm printing them, and also to avoid cutting into the design. And we're doing it at this stage just so you don't waste a lot of extra time carving out background space that we're just gonna cut away anyway. Now that you've cut out the shapes from the block, we're going to carve away the negative space in the background.

Day 20 - Carving small florals

- Today's gonna be very similar to yesterday. We're still working on our multi-block piece. So yesterday we did the leaves, and today we're going to do the flowers, also on a 4x6 piece of material, so we have a PDF, again, I'm just gonna freehand it just like I did yesterday. So taking your ballpoint pen and Sharpie, just draw your two flowers onto the material, and make sure you're happy with the final shape of this before you start carving. I'm going to start carving my block now, and I'm gonna use my #2 tool, a little bit bigger than the #1, and that's because we're gonna be printing on fabric. We're gonna use a slightly thicker ink, so if you have a really small detail, it's not gonna pick up on the fabric, so we're gonna try and keep some of our carving a little bit bigger, and just do exactly as before, start with the smaller details, and work your way out to the background, and carve out the background same as before. We're just gonna do an outline with a larger tool, and then cut around with the scissors, and again, just leave about 1/4-inch of space between your image and where you cut so you have something to hold onto when we're printing, and you don't damage the image. Once you've cut it out with your scissors, you're just gonna take your largest tool again and carve out the background. Now that we have our flowers carved, we're going to combine those with our leaves tomorrow and do some printing on fabric.

Day 21 - Printing on fabric

- Today we're gonna start printing on fabric so we're using a slightly different setup. The most important thing here is that I have some newsprint taped down to my surface because the ink is gonna end up going through the fabric a little bit. So protect the surface that you're working on. The other big difference is that we're using a different type of ink today. So we're using a screen

printing ink and we're using a Jacquard brand screen printing ink, you can use a specialty block printing fabric ink as well. The only thing that you definitely wanna stay away from is a water-based printing ink that's not made for fabric because that will start to run especially if you wash it, it'll turn it into a big mess. So you want to stick with something that's made specifically for fabric or that is oil-based so it won't run when it gets wet. So I'm going to put a little bit of my screen printing ink on the Plexi and it's gonna be the same process of rolling it out as before, so you don't need a ton. Take your roller. And you don't want it to be too thick, so if you've put too much on there you can scrape or wipe a little bit off. You want it to be a nice, even coat on your roller. Before we move onto our fabric, we're just gonna test each block on a sheet of paper. And since we're using screen printing ink, it's going to look a little bit different than our last ink did. And I'm using a blue just because I think it's gonna look nice on the fabric, but you can use any color that you want. So just like before, roll a thin layer of ink. You can see if it looks a little bit too transparent, just roll a little bit more. And place that on your paper, give it some pressure. Then peel slowly and this ink is made for screen printing, like I said, so it's not meant to be block printed on paper like this. So you're gonna get a little bit more of a smudgy look than we were before but that's okay. We're just testing the shape of our blocks. And if you see anything you need to change at this point, you can go back in and edit your block. I can see a little bit up here that I might carve away. And just test your leaves as well. If you're getting too much smudging on the paper to see how the print looks, you can just do it again. We're just testing it so don't worry about trying to get a really clean print. So I'm mostly happy with how these came out, there's a few little details that I'm just gonna clean up on my blocks, but other than that I'm ready to print them on fabric. We've tested our blocks now, so we're ready to start printing on fabric. And I have a sheet of linen here that I've taped down to my surface and you can print on linen or cotton or whatever fabric that you have that you'd like to use as long as it has a smooth texture. You wanna stay away from any really thick fabric that has a lot of texture to it because it won't pick up the detail of your print. So anything with a smoother surface like a cotton or a linen is gonna be good. And we've ironed our fabric so that none of the wrinkles will get into the print, and it's taped down so it's got a nice smooth surface to print on. These four blocks were designed to go together so we're just gonna print them randomly on our surface and you're gonna have fun with just placing them around the surface using them wherever you would like to. And this ink dries pretty quickly so if you start seeing that it's getting patchy, just put more out on your surface. And you want it to be thick enough that you can roll it onto your block easily. So start with whatever you would like. I'm gonna start right in the middle of my fabric. And if you get any smudges or you need to cover anything up, you can just cover it with another print. So just have fun and experiment with placing your shapes around the fabric. And this technique is a little bit different than when we were printing on paper, I'm not using a circular motion this time. I'm just pushing down and kind of giving it a little wiggle like that but I'm not shifting the block around 'cause it'll smudge if you do that. So just give it pressure and then gently peel back. Now I'm gonna add a little bit of leaf shape to the flower. So if you end up making mistakes, don't worry too much, we're just placing our shapes all around randomly so we should be able to cover that up a little bit, let's say we smudge our leaf a little bit. So we've got a smudge right there, don't panic, we're just gonna edit our design and try and cover that up so that you can keep going. So I'm gonna place the same leaf, maybe overlap that a little bit, cover up the mistake and you might find that you really like how the pattern looks after you've fixed these mistakes. So just keep printing all over. Just keep printing until you fill the whole piece of fabric or until you like how it looks and just have fun with the layout. As you're printing, if you see anything picking up ink where you don't want it to, you can still always

edit your block. I'm gonna trim a little bit off of this flower here because it's picking up a little more ink than I want it to. So just clean it up as you go, if there's anything you need to trim down. Once you're happy with your design, you're gonna wanna leave it overnight to dry or depending on the type of ink that you use, just follow their drying instructions. And then you'll need to heat set your fabric using the instructions on your ink. So for this one you would heat set it with an iron and then you'll be able to wash it and use it.

Day 22 - Designing the final block

- By now you should be comfortable carving and printing a block, so we're going to move on to printing a large nine by 12 block for the remainder of this daily challenge. So we've provided a nine by 12 PDF. To assemble this, you'll need to cut out the four separate sheets. And then we will tape them together to create a nine by 12 image. So you can assemble the four pieces like this. And the tiled PDF means that you need to cut them out and put them together since your printer paper is not big enough for a nine by 12 image. So they'll fit together like that. And then you can just put tape on the back and line up those images like that. And do that for all four pieces. Then you can flip it over. Now you have assembled your PDF. So if you'd like to work from this image, then this is ready to go. But if you'd like to create your own image for this final piece, then you're welcome to do that as well. So in order to get a nine by 12 drawing space, I've taped two 8 1/2 by 11 pieces of scrap paper together, and then I just traced around the outline of my nine by 12 Soft-Kut block. And then you're ready to start designing your block. And as we did with previous blocks, we're not gonna go off the edge of the paper unless that's a part of your design that you're really excited about. You can feel free to do that. But we're gonna keep it within the boundary of this nine by 12 piece of Soft-Kut. So a few things to keep in mind while you're creating your design are similar to what we've talked about before. You don't wanna have really big areas of negative space that might end up printing background noise. And you wanna keep the lines a good thickness so that you don't end up printing ink. Basically, all of the troubleshooting that you've done on your block so far, you should take that into account when you're designing this block. So anything that you had trouble with, just keep that in mind and try and avoid any of those same mistakes that you've made before. If you'd like to come up with your own design, then you can feel free to use reference imagery. Be creative with whatever you'd like to carve. And just remember that we're trying to work with bolder shapes and stronger outlines and staying away from really delicate shapes or shading which are hard to do with this material. So be creative, do whatever you want for your imagery. And if you're not quite ready for that step, just use your PDF from here out.

Day 23 - Transferring imagery

- Today we're gonna work on transferring our image from either your PDF or your original drawing onto your 9 x 12 piece of Soft-Kut. I have a 9 x 12 piece of tracing paper over my taped out 9 x 12 PDF, and I'm gonna start by doing little marks in the corner like we've done before. And that way, if you need to take a break or if your tracing paper slips out of your hand you can easily line it up. And then we'll transfer these marks onto the block as well, so if your tracing paper slips then you'll have a reference. And then, since this is gonna smudge a lot because it's pencil on tracing paper, I like to start in the top left corner and work your way down so that you're not rubbing over a lot of the work that you've already done. And this is gonna take a while, so just be patient. And you wanna sketch out all of the lines that you've drawn already onto your tracing paper. (soft bright music) When you finish tracing your whole image onto the tracing paper, you can just flip it over onto your

9 x 12 piece of Soft-Kut. And now you're ready to transfer the image just like we did before. So, take your pencil and just sketch over the back of your tracing. And you can trace those little corner marks on as well, and that way, if you end up moving your tracing paper by accident you'll have a guide ready to go. So, just trace the whole thing onto your block. (pencil scratching) Once you have your pencil transferred onto your block, you're gonna go ahead and draw over that with a Sharpie just to make it all permanent. And I free-handed my drawing earlier, so mine is gonna be a mirror image of what you're carving. So, my final print is gonna be flipped mirror image to what yours ends up as if you're using the PDF. And if you're working with your own original drawing, you'll notice that you have flipped it with the tracing paper. And if you had any text in your final design that you came up with on your own, just make sure that the text is backwards on your final block, otherwise it will print backwards when you're finished. And we'll start carving this tomorrow.

Day 24 - Carving central images

- Your block is now ready to carve. You've got your outlines all laid out and we're gonna get started with the smallest details on your block. So if you're working from this image, you're gonna start with the bird in the middle and I like to start carving the piece that's either the most complicated or the most important for the print and that way, if you make any mistakes, you haven't ruined the most difficult part that you're carving, and if you're working on your own imagery, just choose a part of it that needs a little bit more detail or that you think might take a little bit more time and start there. So we're gonna start with our smallest tools today, either your number one, or since this is a more complex block and we're gonna be carving longer, I'm gonna use some of my file brand tools in and out of this and you definitely don't need to use these. Your Speedball tools will be just as good. I'm just using them 'cause I have them. So just start putting your outlines of your most detailed piece. And just follow closely along with your Sharpie lines. And as you're carving sometimes you might want a slightly heavier line, so just switch around your tools, like we've been doing. You can put more pressure on and make a deeper impression if you'd like to. And again, you're gonna wanna move your block around as you're carving. It's gonna feel a little bit awkward with this nine by 12 block now that we've moved up in size. It's gonna be a little bit heavier and harder to turn. So just work slowly and take the curves slower than you did before. So I'm gonna leave the bird solid and then carve out these little wing shapes. And then on the leaves I'm gonna leave the leaf solid and carve around it. So if you need some help thinking about what's gonna be positive versus negative you can use your white pen and your black pen to help you with that. So if it's helpful to color in places that you wanna leave you can do that. And if you wanna indicate here that you're carving out this wing shape and it's helpful for you to have that in white to remind yourself. You can use the two pens to remind you what you'd like to leave and what you'd like to carve away. So now I'm gonna go in and carve out these little lines. Tomorrow we'll work on the smaller details.

Day 25 - Carving imagery outlines

- Today we're gonna keep carving away the small details of this block and we're going to continue carving out the flowers that are surrounding our image. I've already starting carving away the flowers on this one, so I'm gonna show you how to keep going. It's the same technique we've been using so far. So just take your smallest one or two size tool and go around the outlines leaving the part that you would like to print. And if your knife slips at this point, just try and stay calm and remember what we talked about earlier, about fixing your mistakes. You can just try and think of a way to cover it up. Maybe you can edit the design a little bit as you go, but when you're working on

bigger pieces like this, it's really important to be able to just stay calm and not get too worried if you make a small mistake. Don't be intimidated by how long it's taking to carve. We're gonna work through it piece by piece, and get to the finished product.

Day 26 - Carving flower and leaf details

- We have all of our small details carved out, so now we're gonna go back in and fill in some of the larger details, like the lines in the flowers and some lines in the leaves. And if you're working on your own image, you can go back and just keep getting progressively bigger with the details. I'm gonna start with my number two tool and just go in. And I didn't draw out these details ahead of time, but you are welcome to do that. So I'm just gonna go in and add all of the little details to my shapes on this step. And when you're carving, make sure you're not getting little scraps underneath your block where they'll create an uneven surface and you'll have a harder time getting a smooth line. So just keep doing smooth lines away from you. And I'm using the number two tool just to make sure that I get a nice deep impression on this detail. Just take it slow to avoid slipping and making any mistakes. But remember, if you do make any mistakes, just edit as you go and think of ways to fix those mistakes and change your design as you're carving. Just keep working through your block, and feel free to take breaks or take this part really slow. It does get really tiring on your arms to keep carving this much in one go. So feel free to put it aside and take a little break if you need to. And just work really slowly and carefully at this stage so you're not making any mistakes on your block.

Day 27 - Carving negative space

- By this stage, you should have all of your little details carved out across your whole block. So we're gonna start moving onto the background and taking away some of that negative space. So we're gonna start with our slightly bigger tools. I'm using the two and the three V-shaped knives today. And you can of course go back in and fix little details as you go, so if you need to grab some of your smaller tools, you can feel free to do that. You can always go back and edit the previous day's work. But we're gonna start moving forward on the background. I'm gonna start by just going back over some of these lines that we've already carved. And you wanna be really careful at this stage, so I'm just providing kind of a little border around the detailed shapes so that when I go in with my bigger U-shaped tool to take out the whole background, I'm not coming too close to the detail. So just keep right up to the edge that you've carved already. Just removing that background. And this is a really easy time to slip and mess up, so just hold on really carefully and don't go too fast. Because you're not really carving out details at this stage, it can feel really tempting to speed up and try and rush this part, and that is when I usually make mistakes. So just keep it to the same speed that you were when you were carving out your details. And what I'm basically looking for is to end up with these little pieces that we'll later come in and take away so that we're not putting our larger knife in between any of these small areas here. So if you have a little area like that one, you can take that all out right now, like right here. And if you end up with a larger area like this, I usually like to save that and go back with a bigger knife later for that. So we're just looking at these little pieces of negative space right now and anywhere that's touching a detailed part of your carving. And if you make any mistakes, if you slip at this stage, remember to keep editing. So for example, if I slipped here and accidentally took away this whole leaf, I might think that I wanna take away this leaf, and then maybe I would take away a few others around the image just to make it look more intentional. Or if I slipped and took away a little bit of the bird, I might try and incorporate that into

a pattern for the feathers. So just keep thinking about how you might edit your block if you make any mistakes. So you can see here I took out a little tiny chunk of that leaf there by accident. So not gonna worry too much about it, just go in and smooth that out and keep going. So keep working away on carving around your details, and remember to take a lot of breaks and work really slowly if you have to.

Day 28 - Carving imagery background

- We're almost done carving this block, so the last thing to do is just to remove all of the remaining background imagery. So we're gonna start with our biggest tools this time and just like before, you can go back in and remove smaller details with your small tools if you need to. And if you want to you can use the Sharpie as you go to sketch out what you've already done and just see if there are any mistakes you need to fix or any little edits that you need to make. And if not, we're just gonna take away all of the background imagery. I'm gonna use my bigger tools for this step. And we've just left areas that will be able to be carved with the bigger tools. And feel free to go a little bit smaller if this feels too intimidating. You can use a slightly smaller tool on this stage. And just go really slow. The bigger tools sometimes slip more easily, so take it slow on this step. Take a lot of breaks if you need to. And if you want to use the Sharpie to help you figure out what needs to be carved away you can. If it's helpful for you to indicate which pieces you need to carve out you can make a little mark of that, or you can just carve away wherever you think the background is. And if you make any mistakes, like that, I just took a little nick off of that leaf there, you can just smooth it out. And if you need to go back with a smaller tool just to fix that up you can do that. And be careful on tiny little details like this, the feet. It's easy to mix that or mistake that for a background space and just carve it out. If that happens, don't worry about it, but just try and remember if you have little details like that that need to stay you can make a mark of that with your Sharpie or you just carefully go around that. Making sure you don't take out an area that you're intending to leave. I often find that this is the most satisfying stage of the carving, because you're just working around what you've already done and you're so close to being able to print it. So you're just really almost to the end. When you carve out all of the background in the middle then I like to move out to the border and just slowly carve that away as well. And with this material if you go too deep and you end up carving a hole in it that's okay, just keep going. It'll still print fine if you have a little hole in the background. So just work away at the background trying to carve away from your detail, so you don't slip. And I'm using the biggest tool I have right now, just to take away big chunks. And I hardly ever use this tool if I'm working near a detail or if I'm carving towards a detail, 'cause it just is really big and it slips easily. So I save this one mostly for the edges and the wide background. And then if you end up with a little ridge, like that and you're worried that that's gonna print you can just take a smaller tool and smooth that down. Sometimes these little bumps will end up picking up ink, so you can smooth those out a little bit if you want to. And you definitely don't need the Pfeil brand tools, the Speedball tools just do as good of a job at carving. So just keep chipping away at the background. And then once you have your border carved out you can just go through and see if there's any little areas that you missed. And there usually are for me. So take a smaller tool again. I can see some up here. And just keep working. If you wanna choose a direction to scan everything. Top to bottom or however that works for you. Just go through and look for little pieces where you've missed carving out the background. And again, you can use the big Sharpie for this if you wanna do a coat of Sharpie over everything and see if there's little pieces that haven't been carved away. Or you can just do your best to just look at what's left and then fix those details once you

start printing. So just go back in with a smaller tool, clean everything up. I wanna end this branch on a nice smooth line, so I'm gonna clean that there. And it's looking pretty good, so I'll just keep looking around. Here's another little spot that I missed. And it doesn't have to be perfectly smooth in the background. You'll end up having some jagged lines like this and that's okay. If any of them end up picking up ink you can clean that up after the printing. But if you see any spots that you've missed just keep going back through until you think everything is cleaned up. Congratulations, you've carved out your whole block and you're now ready to print it.

Day 29 - Printing the final block

- We have our finished block here all carved out and ready to go and we are gonna get ready to print it. And this is my favorite part of the process is pulling the first print of a new block 'cause you don't know exactly how it's gonna turn out even if you've done a ton of planning there's always a little bit that you can't predict so this part is really exciting. So, we're gonna be working on the Canson paper again that we ripped down. This is 11 by 14. And that'll give a nice border around our nine by 12 block. And for ink we're gonna stick with this Caligo safe wash ink. And so this is really good for a bigger block because it is oil based, it's a little bit stickier, and it'll help you get a cleaner and less smudgy print. And it's what we've been using so far for this class. If you wanna try a different type of ink there are two types; you can use a water-based ink which will clean up with soap and water, or you can use an oil-based ink which will clean up with mineral spirits. And the reason that we've been using this Caligo safe wash is that it's a special type of ink that is oil-based but it cleans up with soap and water so it's really different than other inks that are out there. I highly recommend using an oil-based ink, but just keep in mind that if that's what you're doing you'll need mineral spirits and it's a bit more of an involved clean up process so stick with this if you can get it. And now we're ready to start printing so we're gonna put down our registration marks just like we did before. We have painter's tape. And I'm just going to lay out where my paper is gonna go first. And, again, I'm just gonna do it in a top corner and a bottom corner. And as you get more advanced, if you're working on a block with multiple colors or if you're trying to put multiple blocks perfectly on the same piece of paper, you'll need to do a more precise registration. But for this where we're just trying to center one block in the middle of the paper this works perfectly. So, you don't have to be too too precise if you're only printing one block. So then we'll move that, bring our block back in. And you can measure the distance from the corners if you would like to, or you can just eyeball that, make sure it is centered inside your registration marks and that will make sure you're centered on the page. Now we're ready to go. So you squeeze out your ink on the plexiglass. I'm using black again, but any dark color will work. Just roll it out and get a nice even covering. And now we're ready to ink up our block for the first time. So this part is really exciting. You're gonna see the image start to pop off the page. And just put a nice even layer. You'll need a little bit more ink for the very first print just to make sure that every little bit is evenly covered. And if you see any little pieces of dust or sometimes you'll get little chunks of ink in there, just move those out with your finger. And then if you didn't Sharpie before, if this is your first time seeing your block with any dark color on it, you might notice a couple little places where you wanna remove a tiny bit of the carving still. And just go back in and take out any little extra pieces that you don't want to be there. And this one. And then just make sure you get rid of that little piece of linoleum that's there. And you can give it one more ink if you smudged it at all while you were cleaning it up. And now you're ready to print. So take your paper, line up the corners, and give it a little pressure with your hand. And this paper is thicker than the one we've been using before so you're not gonna see the image

coming through as much as we did before. Then start with your barren. And just give a consistent pressure. It'll take a bit longer because this block is so much bigger than what we've been working with before. So just try and keep track of where you've applied pressure. And just like before we wanna do gentle motions, you're not yanking it too much so that the paper moves and smudges your print. And you can start to see very lightly that the impression is showing through. And once you feel like you've gotten even pressure over the whole surface you're ready to peel back your print. And this is the most exciting part of the process, I think, so get ready to see your final image. Yay. So you have your finished print now and we're gonna pull a bunch more right now so if your first one isn't completely perfect it's okay. You might have had not enough pressure, too much pressure, maybe not enough ink. So we're just gonna try a few more and see the difference between all of the prints. And just do this same process. You can apply more or less pressure as you need or maybe you smudged it the first time just try and keep it nice and smooth this time. And get ready to peel it again. We have our finished printed art print now and you can keep going for as long as you want, print as many as you would like to. And I think we ended up with some really nice prints today. We have some that came out really nicely and some that didn't work as well. And tomorrow we're gonna talk a little bit about that and what works and what doesn't. But for now you have a finished print run of your new art block.

Day 30 - Signing and editioning your print

- I've done a print run of seven prints with that block, and there are four that I'm really happy with that came out really well, and then there are three over here that have little problems to them, and I'm gonna go over that with you and see what we can fix on our next print run. On this one, you can see that the ink smudged down here. That's because I moved the paper slightly after putting it down on the block. And then up here, I didn't put enough ink on it. So we've got some smudging and uneven printing on this print. So that's not one that I'm gonna be using in the future. I'm not happy with this one, so we're gonna put this one to the side. And then similarly on these two, there's some uneven inking. I like this texture on the bird, but we're losing some details up here and in the flowers. That's because I didn't put enough pressure on it, and there probably wasn't enough ink on it either. And similarly over here, there's a lot more ink on the lower half than on the upper half, so that means I didn't consistently ink the block, and I probably wasn't super even with the pressure either. It's helpful when you have prints that you're not happy with to go through and see what you could've done differently. So now I know that on my next time using this block, I wanna be a little bit more consistent with inking the upper side of it and maybe give more even pressure throughout as well. So I'm not gonna use these three prints anymore that I'm not happy with. We can put those to the side. And you can always cut them up and do something fun with those if you want to, or you can use the back of the paper for testing prints later. So those we won't use anymore. So I'm left with four prints that I'm happy with. So these are consistently inked, and they have nice even pressure all over, and I really like how they look. So now we're going to edition and sign our print. When you hear the term limited edition, that means that there's a set number of prints that have been made and there aren't gonna be any more that are produced. So if you've just finished printing your art print and you think, I'm never gonna print this one again, I want this to be a limited print run, then you can edition your prints. So we have four finished prints, and let's pretend we're never gonna use that block again. You can say one of four, two of four, three of four, and four of four. So you can write that in the lower corner. And that's something you'll see a lot in printmaking. It's definitely not required. And I usually don't edition my prints because I like to do big print runs. And I

like to be able to use them again over and over and come up with new ideas using each block. But if you like the idea of having a limited edition and you want to not print this one again, you can feel free to do that. And then we're going to sign our prints too. So I do this on all of my finished prints that I'm happy with. You can do your signature, or you can do the signature and the date. So just go through and sign each one. And you can do this step even if you're not doing a limited edition. You can feel free to sign your work if you'd like to. And there we have a finished limited edition print run of four prints. Tomorrow we're gonna be printing the same block again, but with white ink. So this is a good time to just make sure that your block is really clean and dry. We don't want any little bits of black ink left on that tomorrow, or it will pick up the white ink. So just go ahead and check your block and make sure that it's ready to print a new color tomorrow.

Day 31 - Printing the final block on dark paper

- For our final project, we're gonna print our same large block, but we're gonna use white ink on a dark paper and that gives a completely different look to your final print. It's gonna look really great. So we have the same brand, we've got the Caligo Safe Wash Ink so that's an oil-based ink that's gonna clean up with soap and water. And I really recommend using something oil-based for a white ink because it's thicker and you'll get a nice even coverage with that. And then for your paper, you can use a black or a navy, anything that will really help the white ink stand out and it's the Canson brand, again. I've ripped it down from a big sheet to this 11 by 14 size. We still have our registration marks from before. So I have my block ready in the middle of my page. And now I'm gonna roll out a nice, thin layer of white on a clean roller and a clean piece of Plexiglass. (rolling out paint) And you want it just like before, a nice, even layer, not too thick and not too thin. It takes a little bit of time to figure out what that feels like. This might be a little bit on the thick side, but with white sometimes that's okay because you want a little bit of heavier coverage. Now we're gonna ink up our block. (rolling on paint) Just make sure you're seeing a nice, thick layer of white everywhere. You can kind of tell with the white ink when it's looking a little bit transparent. It looks a bit more gray. And if your ink is turning a slightly gray color because you have any left over ink or Sharpie on there, it's okay, it should still look really good on the dark paper. So give it a test print before you get too worried about it. (rolling on paint) Grab your paper and line it up on your registration marks. Just like before, you wanna give it a little light pressure with your hand. And with the dark paper, you're not gonna see the ink coming through like we did with the white paper. So just try and give it a nice, even pressure, if you wanna work top to bottom or left the right to make sure that you've covered the whole thing, you can do that. Just the same exact process as before, except we can't see any of that transferred through the paper. Now peel off your final print. I think this print turned out really well. I'm really happy with how it turned out, so I'm gonna pull a couple more. (rolling on paint) (applying pressure to paper) (peeling paper off) I love how the white ink looks and you can see that you can get so many different effects with similar carvings based on the materials that you're using and this white ink on blue paper looks so different than the black ink on white paper. There's so many options to experiment with and try new things with the blocks that you make. And if you clean your blocks carefully and take care of them, they'll last for hundreds of prints, so you can keep experimenting, keep trying out new carvings, and when you're done, don't forget to sign your print. You can use white ink on the dark paper.