

BLOCK PRINTING FOR QUILTERS

KRISTA FLECKENSTEIN



Block printing is a quick and easy technique you can use to create your own designs on fabric! It doesn't have to be complicated—simple shapes can make a big impact. Consider how you can recreate traditional pieced quilt block designs with block prints instead!

Materials Needed (a list with purchase links can be found at spottedstone.com/my-favorite-things):

- Rubber Carving Material
- Craft Knife
- Linoleum Cutter Tool
- Craft Felt
- Ruler
- Screen printing or fabric inks
- Fabric
- Iron

Optional

- Baren
- Foam Brayer
- 1/8" plexiglass or polycarbonate
- Superglue

Creating Your Block:

1. Using your craft knife and ruler, cut your desired shape from your rubber block.
2. If desired, use the linoleum cutter to carve designs on to your rubber block. Hold the linoleum tool at a 30 degree angle against the rubber, making sure that the upper edges of the blade don't go under the surface of the block. Use your ruler as a guide to carve straight lines. To make clean up of the discarded rubber easier, do this on top of a piece of paper.
3. Do a test print on paper. If necessary, continue with the carving until you are satisfied with the test print.

Make Your Own Ink Pad:

1. Cut a piece of craft felt at least an inch larger than your block on all sides.
2. Place it on a flat surface. I like to use a paper plate for easy cleanup.
3. Using a spoon, scoop a small amount of ink onto the surface of the felt. Rub the ink into the felt using the back of the spoon. You want it to saturate the felt, with no pools of ink left on the surface.

Printing:

1. Push your block, face down, onto the ink pad until evenly covered in ink.
2. Place your fabric, face up, on top of a large piece of craft felt. (This padded surface will help you press the ink into the fibers.)
3. Place your inked block onto the fabric. Taking care not to move the block, apply even pressure with your hand or a baren to press it into the fabric.
4. Pull the block off the fabric.
5. Let the print air dry. Once dry, heat set the ink by pressing it with a hot, dry iron according to the ink manufacturer's specifications.

Clean up:

Clean your block with soap and warm water, using a soft toothbrush to gently brush ink from any crevices. Let it air dry.

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Optional:

Instead of making an ink pad, use a foam brayer and a piece of plexiglass or other flat surface to roll ink out until it is tacky. Roll the ink onto the surface of the rubber block before printing.

Mount your rubber block to a piece of 1/8" plexiglass or polycarbonate using super glue. This is a good way to stabilize fragile blocks and keep your fingers clean while printing.



To replicate the Blocks quilt from the show:

1. Cut (36) 4" squares of your solid fabric (I used Paintbrush Studios solid in Snow).
2. Make your printing blocks by cutting (2) 1.75" by 2.25" rectangles from your rubber material. Leave one block as is, and carve horizontal lines across the short side of the other to create the stripes.
3. Using various ink colors (mine are a mix of teals, green, and rust), print 30 of the squares with the solid rectangle block by lining it up in the center of the bottom edge of the fabric..
4. Use black ink to print 6 of the squares with the striped block in the same fashion.
5. Allow the blocks to dry. Heat press to set the ink.
6. Arrange your blocks in a 6 x 6 grid.
7. Sew together with a 1/4" seam.
8. Sew a 2" border of solid fabric around each side.
9. Quilt and bind as desired!

ABOUT KRISTA FLECKENSTEIN

For other textile printing techniques and mixed media projects, pick up Krista's book [Beyond Cotton](#). Her work can also be found at www.spottedstone.com.

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