

The Tea-Drunk Tailor's Block Printing Tutorial

Inspired by the block printing of Lisa Joseph on her marvellous Heian garments found [here](#), I employed a similar process creating the pattern on Musashi's *kosode* when I recreated his outfit from the end of *Duel at Ichijoji Temple* (1955).

Materials:

6mm Craft Foam

Xacto Knife / Scalpel

Paint

Paper Towel

Wax Paper

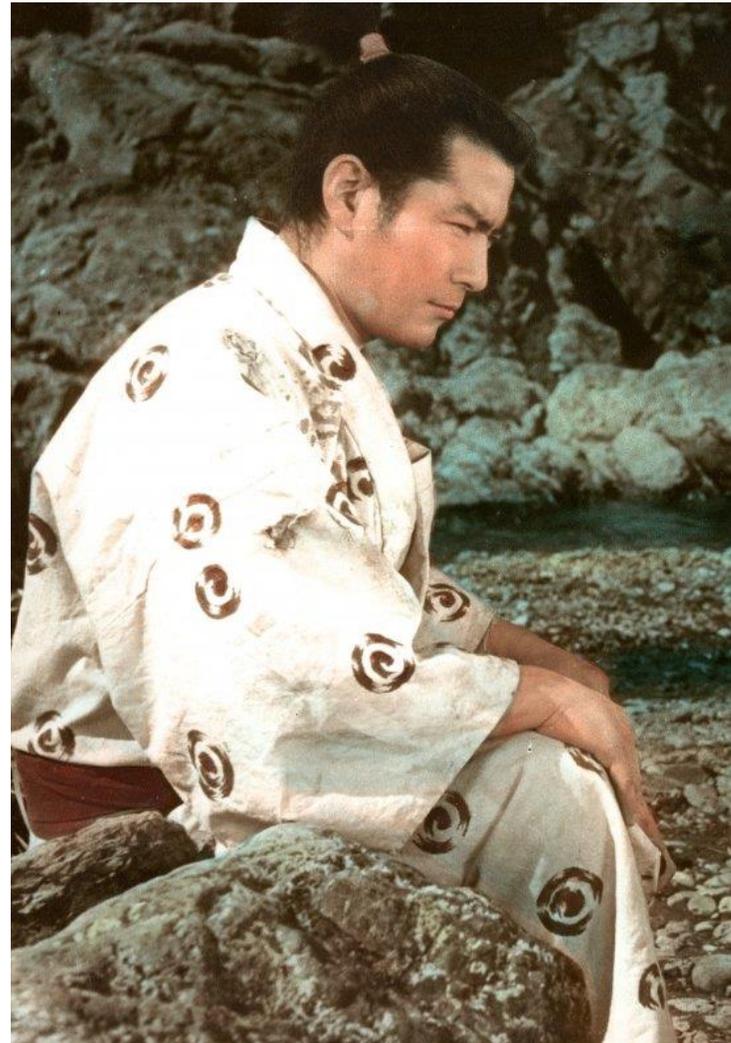
Small Paint Roller

Masking Tape

Practice Scraps

Hot Glue

Final Garment Fabric



Step 1

Prepare your printing block. In Musashi's case, I determined the approximate size of his design to be 2.5" x 2.5" so I drew out a square in that size on a scrap of 6mm craft foam. Then I sketched on the rough shape of his swirl designs and cut it out with the scalpel. It is **extremely** important to use a sharp blade here if your design is intricate.



Step 2

Add the block back. Once the design was cut out in two separate pieces, I needed to add a backing since it was useless as a printing block otherwise. I cut a second piece of 6mm foam, marginally broader than the design, and attached the loose design pieces with hot glue.



Step 3

Prepare your painting mat. This is where you will dip your block into your paint. I used two sheets of paper towel with a wax paper underlay to keep things paint-free below. Tape towels and wax paper to the table to keep them from shifting during use.



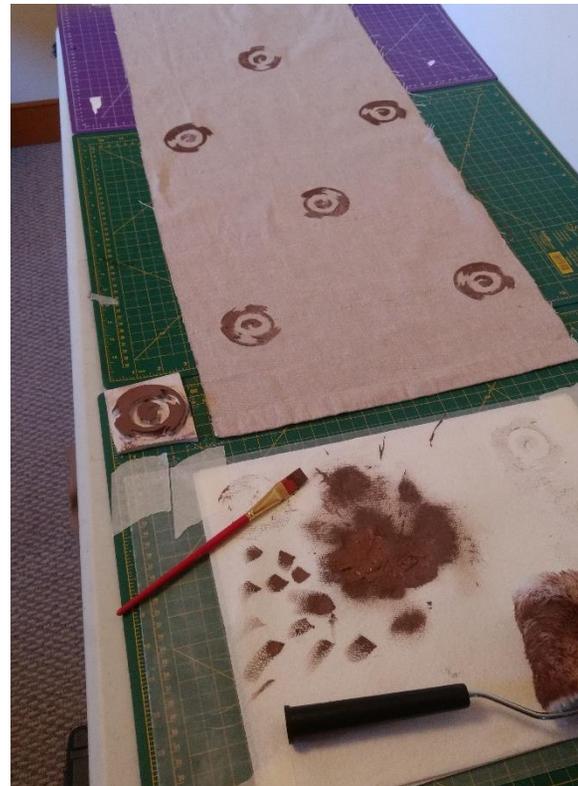
Step 4

Test your printing block. Getting a handle on the behaviour of the technique / medium will save you a lot of grief during actual application, so I recommend practicing on some scraps before. I found that brushing the paint on to the block was less effective than rolling it on with a roll brush and dabbing the excess off before applying it to the fabric.



Step 5

Have at it! Once you are comfortable with the technique, apply the design to your final fabric as needed. In Musashi's case, his design had minor alterations through each application; rather than cutting half a dozen different blocks, I applied the paint selectively to the block to achieve the different looks.



Step 6

Sew your garment.



Have fun! Don't hesitate to email me at teadrunktailor@gmail.com if you have any questions or to show off your work!