

## THE COLOR REDUCTION WOODCUT

The reduction method of printing color woodcuts is best described by its name. The printing matrix, a single block of wood, is “reduced” (cut away) in numerous stages to produce a multicolored print on paper requiring several “runs” through a printing press. The first color is sometimes printed from the whole block. Sometimes a minimal amount of wood is removed to designate the first color, which will actually be the color of the paper showing through.

The size of the edition must be determined with the printing of the first color, as there is no possibility of reprinting due to the “reduction” (destruction) of the block. After the first color is printed, all ink is removed from the block. All areas of the block, which are to remain this color in the finished image, are then cut away. The entire block is inked and printed in the second color depositing ink over the first color except in the newly cut areas. This process of cutting and inking is repeated until the image is complete.

I also frequently use mylar stencils to work reductively within a given shape within the image. My printing matrix is one block of 1/4” luan mahogany plywood.

I print on handmade Japanese kozo paper with oil based relief inks. Using brayers or a litho roller to apply the ink to the wood, I frequently include blended (split font) rolls of several colors. ***Spectrum*** was completed in only two runs thru the press while ***Sab pan yu*** took twenty-one runs. All my work is archivally framed.

You can see me printing two of the 15 runs for ***Lovely Legs*** in a You Tube video: Cathie Crawford Printmaker. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_jFEZZ9\\_S0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_jFEZZ9_S0)