

anne meredith barry:
woodcut printing

facts:

brayers (rollers) used in woodcut

Woodcuts first appeared in ancient China, and from the 6th century onwards were developed for the printing of images in religious texts.

Today, contemporary artists have taken woodcut printing to a new level, utilizing modern tools such as sandblasters, resists and even steamrollers to create bigger and bolder works.

feature work from our Permanent Collection

Born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Anne Meredith Barry completed her formal artistic training at the Ontario College of Art in 1954. Exhibiting extensively over the next decades, Barry later moved her practice to Newfoundland and has lived and worked in the province since 1987. Much of her work centres on the exploration of her natural surroundings; the vibrancy of colours, patterning and texture found in the lakes, forests and rocky crags of the Canadian landscape.

“...here, I live surrounded by an environment which is characterized by constant change... turbulent coastal weather, for dramatically different seasons, and the endless rhythmic migration of iceberg, whales, seabirds and sea creatures....My neighbours and I inhabit the space between these worlds, aware of, and affected by both.”

Anne Meredith Barry on living in
St. Michael's, Newfoundland

Process: What is Woodcut?

Perhaps the most straightforward of the processes available to the contemporary printmaker, woodcut remains a popular choice for its uncompromisingly graphic aesthetic. Essentially, the artist is creating a large stamp. Woodcut is a relief technique, meaning the printed image remains flush to the surface of the matrix. The negative space – which will be printed in white, is carved out by the artist with a gouge or a knife. Once the block is ready, it is rolled up with ink and printed. Unlike other printing methods, woodcut does not require ample amounts of pressure in order to print. The artist can even print their woodcut by rubbing the back of a wooden spoon across paper laid on top of the block.

station gallery

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featurework

The dynamism typical of Barry's work features strongly in this piece acquired by Station Gallery's permanent collection, entitled August Colours. Barry chooses not only to focus on the natural aesthetic qualities of the Newfoundland waterways, but pays particular attention to the movement and energy of the water, using the woodcut technique to emphasize the drama of the rushing river and the effect of the summer light on the rocky landscape. In discussing her inspiration for her work, Barry says: "I live surrounded by an environment characterized by constant change – turbulent weather, four dramatically different seasons, and the endless rhythmic migrations of icebergs, whales, seabirds and sea creatures. Everything outside my studio is both in harmony and in conflict. Everything endlessly creates and destroys each other – wind, water and land."



August Colours
1992
Wood block on paper
59.9 x 76.2 cm

curriculum questions

What elements are repeated in this work? (look for colour repetition, shape repetition, line repetition)

How does her water convey a sense of direction?

How has she grouped related items together? How do you think this adds to the overall artwork?

curriculum link

Grade 7, Principle of Design Focus : Unity and Harmony (from The Ontario Curriculum for The Arts 2009)

Unity and harmony: radial balance (e.g., a mandala); similarity (e.g., consistency and completeness through repetition of colours, shapes, values, textures, or lines); continuity (e.g., treatment of different elements in a similar manner); alignment (e.g., arrangement of shapes to follow an implied axis); proximity (e.g., grouping of related items together)