

Making Japanese Style Portfolios

Hyla Skudder - Guest Artist, 2003

8th grade Multicultural Language Arts/Art Class, Integrated Art Activity
Heritage Middle School, Westerville, OH



The Purpose: The students were studying Japanese and Chinese poetry, and writing their own original poems modeling these styles. This integrated art activity served to give students a further in depth understanding of Japanese artistic expression, and also served the practical purpose of storing their writings during the Asian Culture unit.



Student trimming the edges from her foam block to prevent unwanted areas from printing.

Making the Rubber Stamps:

Students were shown examples of Japanese designs (fabric designs, family crests, Japanese characters), and the characteristics of Japanese patterns were discussed. Students then designed one or two rubber stamps using these designs or creating their own in a stylized manner. These designs were drawn (in reverse) in sheets of craft foam, cut out with craft knives, and glued onto small blocks of styrofoam.



Printing the Papers:

Students printed their rubber stamps on large sheets of heavy white or colored craft papers with colored ink pads. Multi-colored "rainbow" pads produced particularly striking results. Students experimented with tiling with their designs.



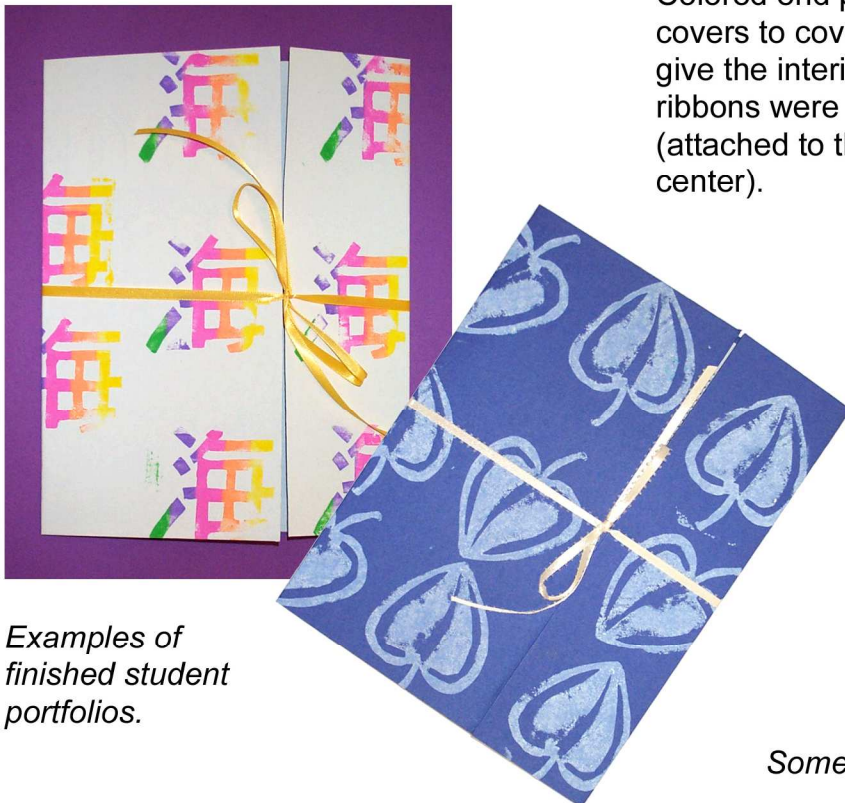
A student printing her design.



Sample of a student printed paper.

Making the Portfolios: The printed papers were wrapped around thin cardboard covers (cut from cereal boxes) that were slightly larger in all dimensions than a standard letter-sized sheet of paper. The printed papers were adhered to the covers with glue sticks, except for the edges for which a thick craft glue was used for durability.

Colored end papers were glued on the inside of the covers to cover the exposed cardboard areas and give the interior a finished look. Colorful cloth ribbons were added to tie closed the portfolios (attached to the back with a dab of hot glue in the center).



Examples of finished student portfolios.



Some designs were refreshingly whimsical!