

Exhibition: *Deep Cuts: Block Printing Across Cultures*

Dates: November 9, 2025–September 13, 2026

Location: Resnick Pavilion



(Image captions on page 3)

(Los Angeles, CA—October 28, 2025) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Deep Cuts: Block Printing Across Cultures*. Drawing primarily from LACMA’s permanent collection, the exhibition explores the repeated revival, reinvention, and refinement of block printing—the world’s oldest and most versatile method of making multiple images. Where traditional surveys have dissected the history of printing by geography, chronology, and typology, *Deep Cuts* bridges these silos to reveal more expansive, interconnected stories.

Organized thematically, *Deep Cuts* invites visitors to consider the medium not only as a means of creative expression but also as a vehicle for mass production that enabled images and ideas to circulate widely. The works in this exhibition span centuries and cultures, dating back to the eighth century and originating in Asia, Europe, and North America. The selection includes more than 200 objects, ranging from textile designs to printed books, scrolls, devotional images, wallpaper, costumes, and monumental contemporary prints, demonstrating the remarkable diversity and longevity of this medium.

Deep Cuts features several recently acquired works, including pieces by Carmen Argote, Christiane Baumgartner, and Analia Saban. Also on view for the first time at LACMA are woodblock prints by mother-and-daughter-in-law artists Yoshida Fujio and Yoshida Chizuko; an impression of the *Brücke Manifesto* (one of only five in existence, and one of only two in the U.S.); and prints by Black American artists including Margaret Burroughs, Samella Lewis, Alison Saar, and Hale Woodruff.

Deep Cuts is curated by Erin Maynes, Associate Curator of Prints & Drawings at LACMA.

“I’m excited to immerse visitors in a world of print, filled with materials that don’t typically get shown together, from textiles and costumes to books and early modern devotional prints to large-scale multi-part works,” said Maynes.

“*Deep Cuts* not only showcases the individual strengths of many areas in our collection, but also the power of the stories they can tell together,” said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. “With no single narrative, beginning, or end, the exhibition models how connections among the works in our care can open new points of entry for visitors to understand the history of art.”

Exhibition Organization

Deep Cuts narrates the history of block printing through four themes: transmission, pattern, process, and expression.

Block printing’s earliest history is difficult to trace because the ink, paper, and cloth used in its production are perishable. **Transmission** includes one of the oldest-known surviving block prints: a “million pagoda” dharani (sacred verse) scroll from Japan, printed around 764 CE. Created as a devotional object, it demonstrates the medium’s crucial role in advancing the spread of Buddhism across Asia. Centuries later, the expansion—and transformation—of Christianity was similarly shaped by the printing of the Bible in Europe. Other works in this section show how print could personalize religious practice by bringing sacred texts and images into the hands of individual worshippers for private use.

Process illustrates how, historically, producing and printing block prints—whether on paper or fabric—was a labor-intensive endeavor that required scale to be economically viable. As a result, designing the image, carving the blocks, and inking and printing were often handled by separate individuals with specialized skills working collaboratively in a workshop setting. Today, artists often partner with artisans and master printers with the technical knowledge to realize their work at the highest level. This section includes process sets—which show the evolution from concept sketches to carved woodblocks to progressive proofs and final prints—by makers such as Paul Landacre, William Morris, and the L.A.-based studio Block Shop.

From its inception, block printing has served as a means of repeating ornamental designs on cloth and paper. Indian block-printed textiles, known as chintz, were prized for centuries across Asia, Europe, and North Africa. **Pattern** features a range of items made from cloth, such as dresses, a kimono, and a ceremonial textile, illustrating how artisans adapted their designs to meet the demands of a global market. This section also highlights how the visual language of modern design movements, including Arts and Crafts in Britain and Jugendstil in Germany and Austria, was also decisively shaped by the block print.

Expression examines prints that foreground the materiality of wood and the physicality of the carving process. Marking a new approach to block printing, early 20th-century artists embraced the texture of woodgrain and the gestural quality of the cut to heighten emotional intensity and personal expression. Contemporary artists continue to engage with these earlier traditions, reclaiming the medium's expressive force while critically examining its histories.

Credit: *Deep Cuts: Block Printing Across Cultures* was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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About LACMA: Located on the Pacific Rim, LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection of more than 150,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe. Committed to showcasing a multitude of art histories, LACMA exhibits and interprets works of art from new and unexpected points of view that are informed by the region's rich cultural heritage and diverse population. LACMA's spirit of experimentation is reflected in its work with artists, technologists, and thought leaders as well as in its regional, national, and global partnerships to share collections and programs, create pioneering initiatives, and engage new audiences.

Location: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. lacma.org

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