

Fun Fish Art Made Easy

Hang trophy fish and eat it too!

SIX STEPS TO FISH PRINTS

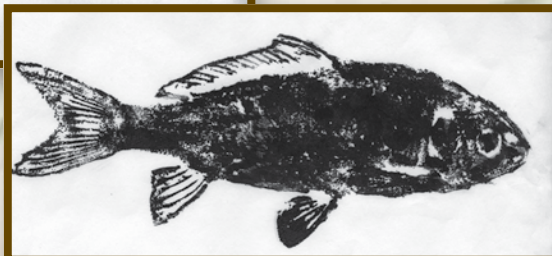
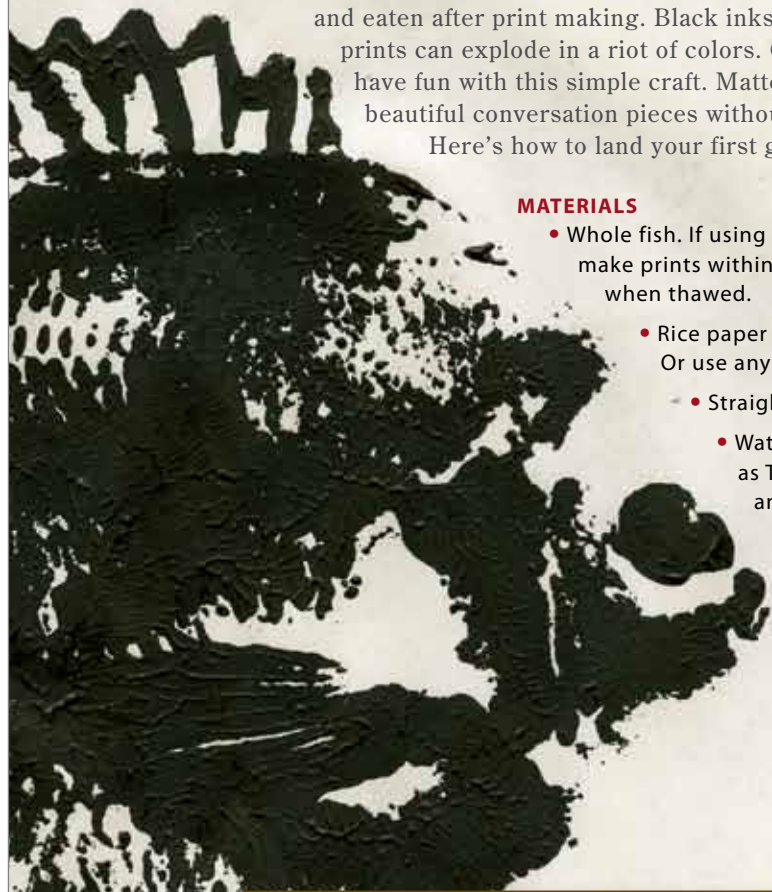
Used by Japanese anglers in the 1800s as a way to record the size and species of their catch before the haul was sent to the fishmonger, gyotaku (gee-oh-tak-oo) is a fast growing activity evolved into an art. Using water-based paints or ink, fish can be washed and eaten after print making. Black inks give a classic, fine art feel, or prints can explode in a riot of colors. Children, families and artisans have fun with this simple craft. Matted and framed, they make beautiful conversation pieces without the cost of taxidermy.

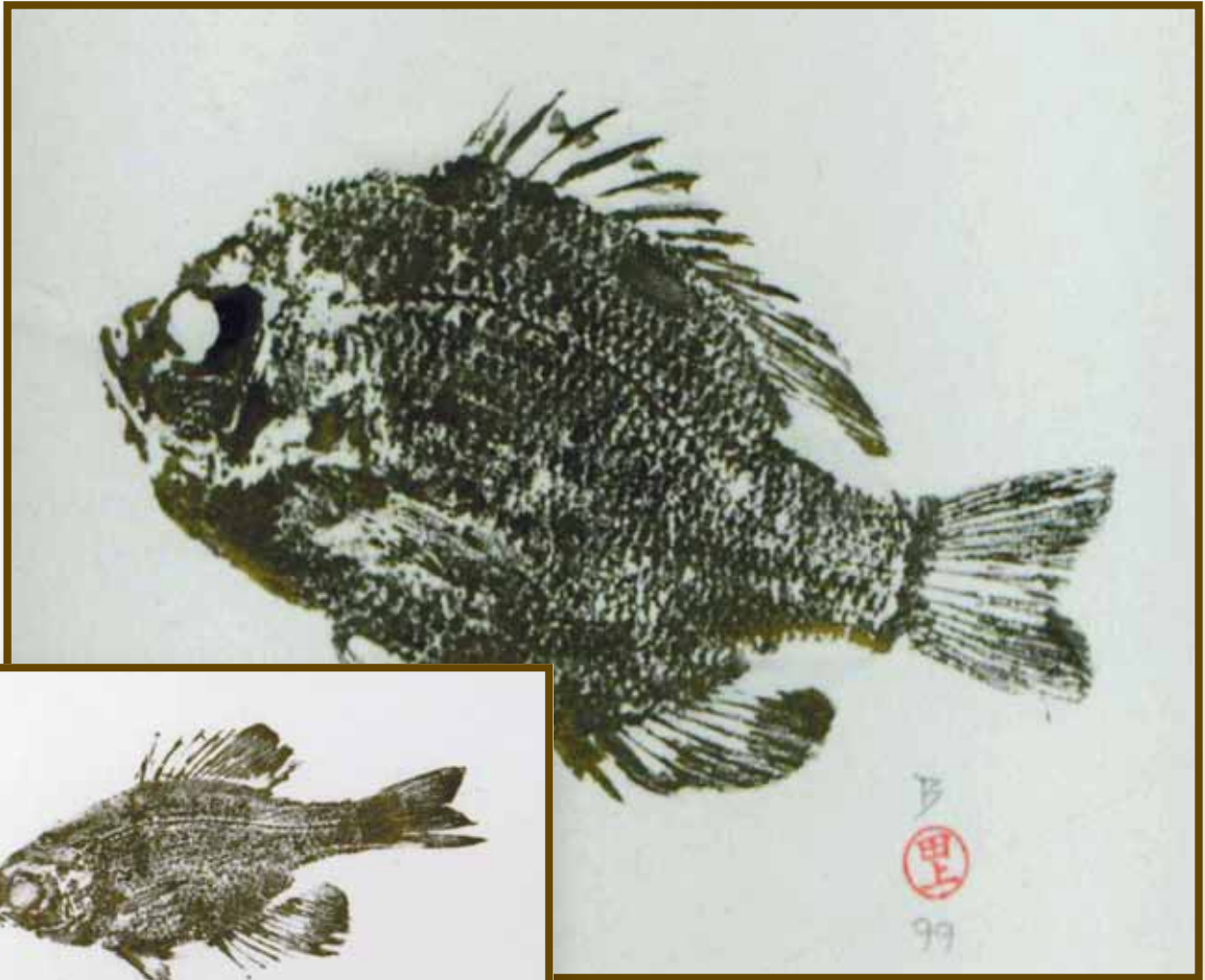
Here's how to land your first gyotaku.

MATERIALS

- Whole fish. If using fresh caught fish, keep it cold and make prints within 24 hours. Frozen fish work well when thawed.
- Rice paper or fabric from craft or art store. Or use any acid-free archival paper.
- Straight pins
- Watercolors or water-based ink such as Tempera, block ink, fabric ink or any thick water-soluble ink.
- Paper towels
- Play-Doh® or modeling clay
- Old magazines or newspapers
- Half inch brushes or roller, small detail brush
- Cotton balls
- Hair dryer

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1) Clean fish. Wash with a few drops of dish detergent and water, or use salt or lemon juice to gently remove slime from body and fins. Dry fish with paper towels.

2) Cover work surface with newspapers. Stretch open fins to make them look natural, and secure with straight pins from underside so the pin head doesn't show. Large fins may need support with Play-Doh® or

clay. If the fish is gutted, fill cavity with paper towels. Remove eye or cover with a small amount of cotton.

3) Dry the fish. A hair dryer can quicken the process. When dry enough, fins will stay in place once the pins are removed.

4) Apply ink. Brush a thin coat of ink over the entire fish, except the eye. Begin head to tail, then tail to head to ensure ink is under scale edges. If used, remove clay or Play-Doh®. Position paper above fish where you wish print to appear. Drop paper. Avoid smudges by not moving the paper.

5) Rub paper against fish, ensuring paper doesn't slide while on the fish. Rub gently, touching all areas of body and fins to transfer ink. Carefully peel off paper. If using different colors, use lightest color first. Paint eye using a small brush. Wash fish and repeat above steps if you have smudges or areas of poor ink transfer. Clean fish of ink and refrigerate or freeze. (*See our Japanese inspired fish recipe on page 58.*)

6) Sign your print, matte and frame.