

## Ou Da-wei

### Suggested class activities for Senior Primary

**Artist:** OU Da-wei

**Level:** Senior Primary

**Theme:** My Goals in the New Academic Year

**Suggested length:** 3 hours

**Teaching concept:**

The Chinese literati take pride in excelling at poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal carving. OU Da-wei's profound knowledge of these four types of art makes him a modern literati artist. OU is sensitive to his daily life, where he finds inspiration for his poetry, calligraphy and seal works in his surroundings, personal experiences and global issues. He excels in infusing a modern style and spirit into traditional and ancient art forms.

This course improves students' understanding and appreciation of traditional Chinese art through appreciating and studying OU's art. The students will create works related to everyday living using traditional Chinese materials and methods.

**Required background knowledge:**

1. The students should be able to write with an ink brush.
2. They should be able to cut out complex shapes with scissors.

**Teaching goals:**

1. Learn about OU's poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal work through his video.
2. Learn about and appreciate OU's leisure seals.
3. Learn about the characteristics of *zhuwen* (red character style) and *baiwen* (white character style) seals.
4. Create *zhuwen* (red character style) leisure seals using the collage technique.

**Suggested class activities:**

1. **Introduce OU Da-wei and his artistic style. (Suggested length: 3 mins)**

**Show the "Artist Introduction ppt" pp1-3**

Born in Guangzhou in 1947, OU Da-wei was a student of Wu Zifu at a young age. He was well-versed in poetry, Chinese calligraphy, landscape painting and seal carving, and received a number of awards, including the Urban Council Fine Arts Award – Calligraphy (1989) and Seal Carving (1998), and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council Award for Artistic Development

(1998).

OU's early calligraphic works were characterised by a natural naiveté. His free-flowing, vivid cursive script has attracted attention in recent years. His landscape ink-wash paintings emphasize expressive brushwork, while his signature seal carving is marked by maturity and simplicity.

2. **Video viewing guide (Suggested length: 2 mins)**

- What is Chinese literati?
- Their interest in the arts

3. **Play the “Artist Video mp4” (Suggested length: 20 mins)**

Select parts of the video depending on your focus, pausing as needed to explain the content or ask questions

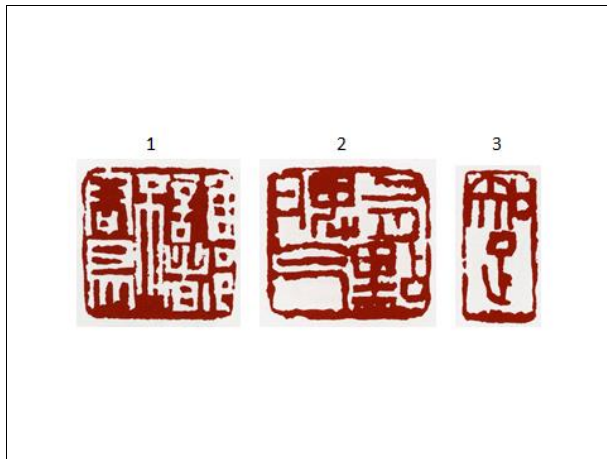
Suggested Q&A

- What are the requirements of the Chinese educated artists?  
(Should be excellent at writing poems, calligraphy and painting. Some of them may also know seal-carving.)
- Which aspects of arts OU is good at?  
(OU has profound knowledge of poetry, calligraphy, painting and seal carving)
- Do you like OU's artworks?  
(For example, his poems, which are closely related to daily life; the diversified fonts of his calligraphy; his ever-changing ink-wash landscape paintings; and his comical leisure seals.)

4. **Appreciation OU's works (Suggested length: 5 mins)**

Show the “Artist Introduction ppt” pp5-8

- Explain to the students that the learning goal of this lesson is seal by OU, ask them to guess the Chinese characters carved on the seals. 《誰都不容易》(Not easy for anyone)·《有點脾氣》(A bit of temper)·《知足》(Contentment)



**Guide the students to appreciate in the following steps:**

- **Description:** Describe the shape, colour and script of the seals  
(They are normally in square or rectangular shape. Red in colour and the fonts are represented by red or white. The script is arranged from right to left, top to bottom, and the lines are quite irregular, etc.)
- **Formal analysis:** How to make a seal carving?  
(First, write Chinese characters on the seal with Chinese brush, then carved with knife. Press the seal evenly on the seal paste and stamp on the paper.)
- **Interpretation:** What are the characteristics of his leisure seals?  
(The themes are mainly speaking of philosophy or for leisure. The fonts are interesting, and the characters resemble drawings; the strokes are carved as saw's teeth and expressed in a playful style.)

**5. Exploring the seal works (Suggested length: 15 mins)**

Show OU's seal works and the **“Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt” pp3-6**

- Explain the inscription contents in two commonly used seals: Name seals and Leisure seals

## Inscription contents in the seals



國標李

(Name: Lee Kwok-leung)

Square seal with three characters carved in relief / 2009



閒閒地

(At ease)

Oval seal with three characters carved in relief / 2008

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## Inscription contents in the seals

### Name seals

- They serve as signatures.
- The fonts are rather formal and structured.

### Leisure seals

- There are implications in the messages.
- The fonts are rather lively and diversified.



Square seal with three characters carved in relief / 2009



Oval seal with three characters carved in relief / 2008

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- The differences between *zhuwen* and *baiwen* seals:

## Differences between *zhuwen* (朱文) and *baiwen* (白文) inscriptions



天妙  
開想

(Out of My Mind)

Square seal with four characters carved in relief / 2002



歡滿  
喜心

(Contented)

Square seal with four incised characters / 2003

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## Zhuwen (朱文)

- also known as red character style or *yang* carving
- the area of the characters is kept, while the empty area is carved out
- the characters are carved in relief in the seal



Square seal with four characters carved in relief / 2002

## Baiwen (白文)

- also known as white character style or *yin* carving
- only the area of the characters is carved out
- the characters are incised in the seal



Square seal with four incised characters / 2003

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- Pay attention to the font, composition and alignment of the seals. The seal script characters are often arranged so as to fully utilise the space, so that a rich visual effect can be created in print.

### 6. Introduce the art-making process (Suggested length: 15 mins)

Show the “**Supplementary Teaching Materials ppt**” pp8-15 or part of the “**Techniques Demonstration Video mp4**” 07:30 – 21: 50

- Make a leisure seal in relief characters with adhesive craft foam.
- Design the characters, eg. 不可(一)世 acting arrogantly
- Design requirements:
  - Have the students to write the characters in creative fonts and write freely.
  - Thicker strokes make it easier to cut the characters out later.
  - When writing, have them make good use of the empty space to create a richer visual effect.

## Design the characters (eg. 不可一世 acting arrogantly)



1. Draw a cross with pencil to divide the *xuan* paper into four sections.
2. Then, draw the frame with a Chinese brush.



3. Design the characters and write in the sequence of top right, bottom right, top left and bottom left.

- Write the characters on the craft foam

## Write the characters on the craft foam



1. On an adhesive craft foam, draw a cross with pencil to divide the back side into four sections.



2. Then, draw a frame with a Chinese brush.



3. Repeat the characters on the back side of the craft foam.



4. All the characters must touch the frame line.

- Cut out the characters



5. When the ink is dry, cut the frame line out.



6. Paste the frame line onto the four sides of a foam board.



7. Cut out the characters.

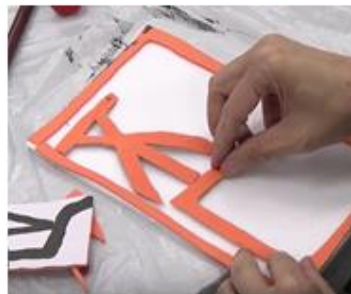


8. It may be hard to cut out the space within the characters. Cut across the strokes or cut off certain strokes.

- Stick the characters on a foam board



9. Flip over the *xuan* paper draft for reference.



10. Stick the characters onto a foam board according to the images seen on the *xuan* paper draft.





11. All the characters are reversed side on the foam board.

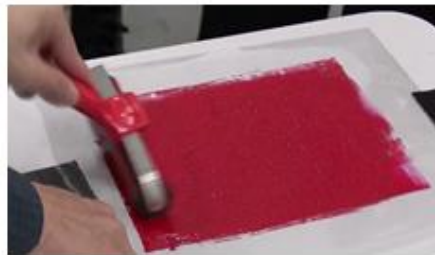
- **Printing:**

- Clear the desk to make space for the printmaking work.
- Before printing, fix the position of the print by placing the foam board in the centre of the xuan paper and use a pencil to slightly mark the four corners of the board.

### Printing



1. Apply water-based printmaking ink.



2. Spread the ink evenly with an ink roller.



3. Apply ink to the craft foam side with an ink roller.



4. Place the *xuan* paper on top, with the foam board at the centre. Rub evenly with a baren or dry towel.



5. The characters printed on the *xuan* paper will be the same as the writing on the draft.

7. **Class activity (Suggested length: 120 mins)**

- The theme is “My Goals for the New Academic Year”.
- Encourage the students to write about their goals.
- Remind them to design the characters lively with personal style.

8. **Appreciation of the students' works (Suggested length: 10 mins)**

9. **Materials**

Chinese calligraphy brush, ink, sized *xuan* paper, adhesive craft foam (A5/square), scissors, styrofoam board (A5/square), red printmaking ink, ink roller and baren (or dry towel)