



School Visits

2019–20 Grades
K–12

Online Learning – DIY:
Styrofoam Plate Printmaking!

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Printmaking is one of our students' favourite workshops at **School Visits**. When the School Visits teacher pulls the first print, the students gasp in delight and cheer loudly. It is a **magical process** and full of **wonderful surprises**. You can make the same image again and again, and you can change the image by adding different colours.

About this resource

Thanks for accessing our Online Learning resources! These step-by-step instructions will help you and your family to express their own creativity and build connections to the Ontario Arts Curriculum.

About us

Harbourfront Centre School Visits is an experiential, hands-on learning program that offers curriculum-focused, inquiry-based programs that explore all aspects of contemporary arts and culture. Every year, we host 26,000 students onsite for meaningful engagements with the arts. We trust you will find the step-by-step guide outlined below will allow creativity to shine through!

Suggested Grade Range:

Grade 1 and up

Curriculum Links:

The Arts – Visual Arts

Key vocabulary words

- **MATRIX:** The base/surface from which a print is made. It can be manipulated to hold ink, which is then transferred to paper. Some of the materials you could use as a matrix for your prints are a

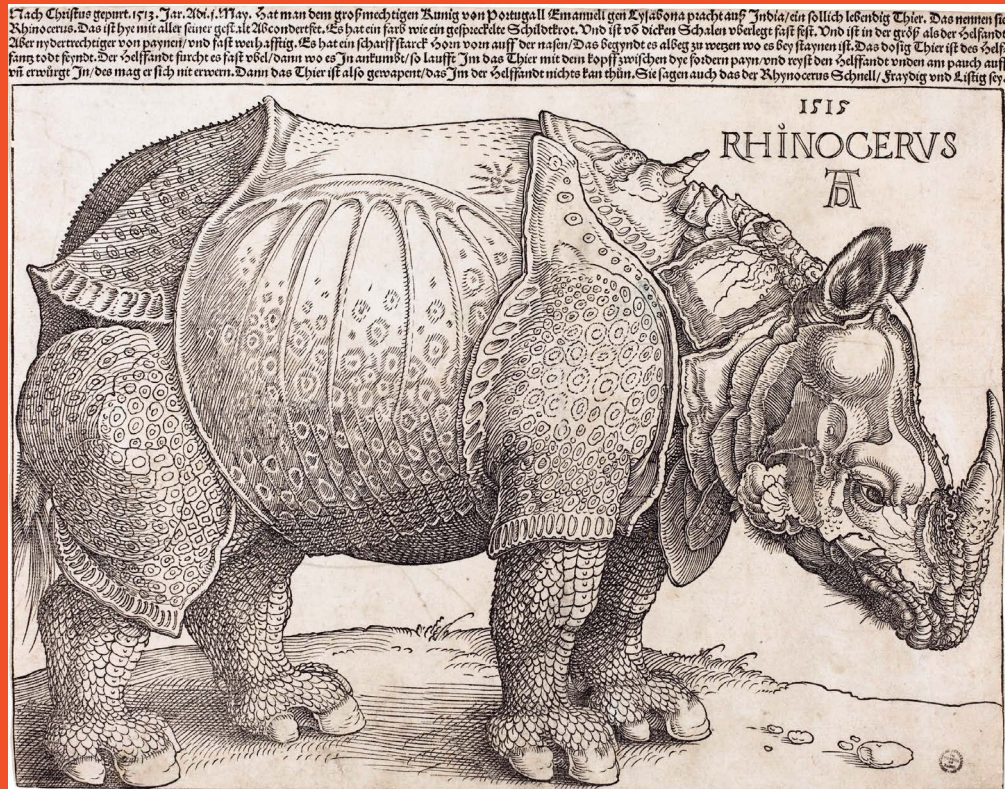
standard metal plate, lithographic stone, woodcut, linocut, stencil or styrofoam plate.

- **RELIEF:** Where ink is applied to the original surface of the matrix. Relief techniques include woodcut (or woodblock) and linocut.
- **TEXTURE:** An element of design. The texture of something is the way that it feels when you touch it, for example how smooth or rough it is.
- **REFLECTION/FLIP:** When you flip an image, you are creating a mirror image or a reflection. The image is the same; you are just flipping it over.

Required Materials

- SCISSORS
- PENCIL
- NEWSPAPER
- TEMPERA/ACRYLIC PAINT
- SPONGE OR PAINT BRUSH
- PAPER TO PRINT ON (Bond paper or computer paper is fine)
- A CLEAN STYROFOAM PLATE (Meat/Vegetable packing tray or purchased Styrofoam plates)

History



Albrecht Durer, *Rhinoceros*, woodcut 1515

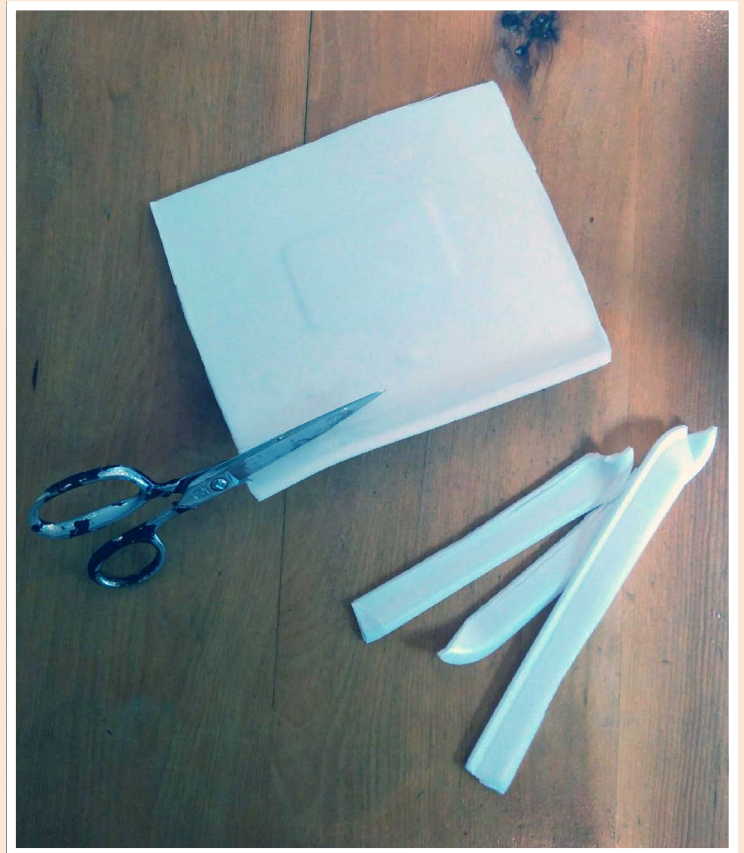
Albrecht Durer

Over 500 years ago, printmaking was not considered a real art form. Printed images were used for illustrations in books and publications. A German artist by the name of Albrecht Durer (1471–1528) created woodcuts with such exquisite surface texture, pattern and design that people wanted to frame them and put them on display like paintings and sculptures. He revolutionized printmaking and raised it to the level of an independent art form.

Step-by-step instructions

Step 1:

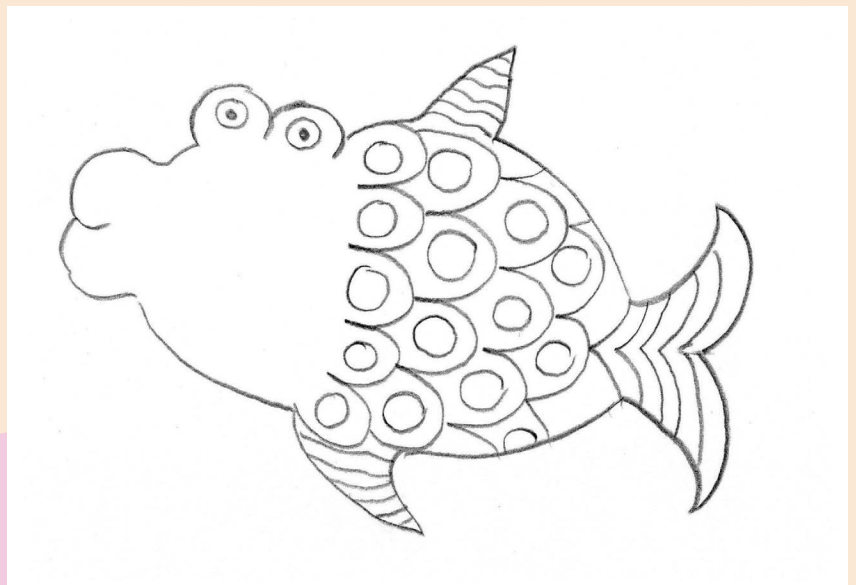
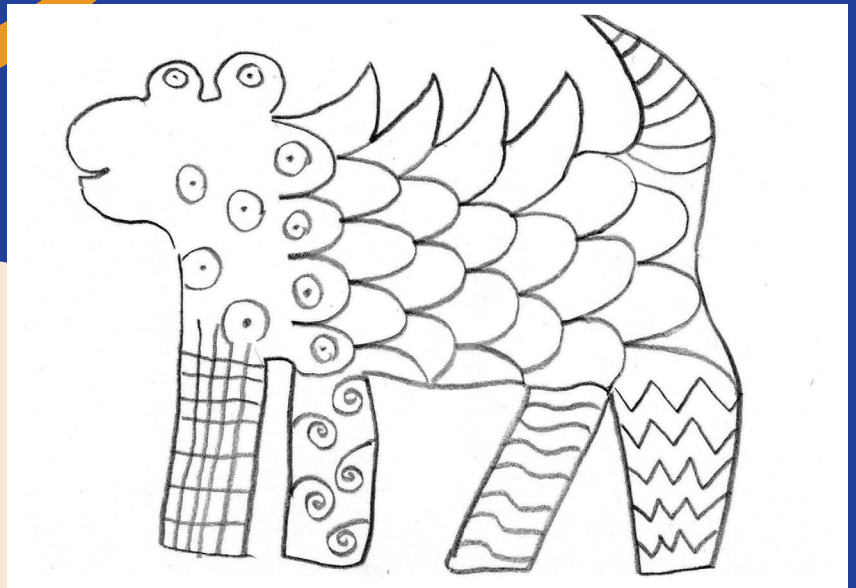
Using scissors, remove the curved sides of a CLEAN styrofoam plate. You will be left with a flat surface.



Step 2:

Plan or sketch your image on a piece of paper before drawing into your plate. Notice the pictures are made up of many different lines (zig zag, wavy, vertical, diagonal, horizontal, straight) and shapes and marks (spirals, dots, circles). Think about the surface texture of your image. Does it have feathers, scales or dots? Use a variety of lines, marks and shapes to create a design that describes the surface texture of your picture.

Note: Your printed image will be a reflection or the reverse of your plate. In Albrecht Durer's *Rhinoceros*, he carved the words backwards into the woodcut so that when the print was pulled and the paper was flipped over, the words would be oriented the right way.



Step 3:

Draw the outline of your image lightly onto the styrofoam using a pencil. Make sure your image is large enough to fit the styrofoam plate. Once you feel confident that your image is what you want, go over your drawing, applying more pressure with the pencil and making your lines a little bit deeper. Your lines should be below the surface, but they should not go through the styrofoam.

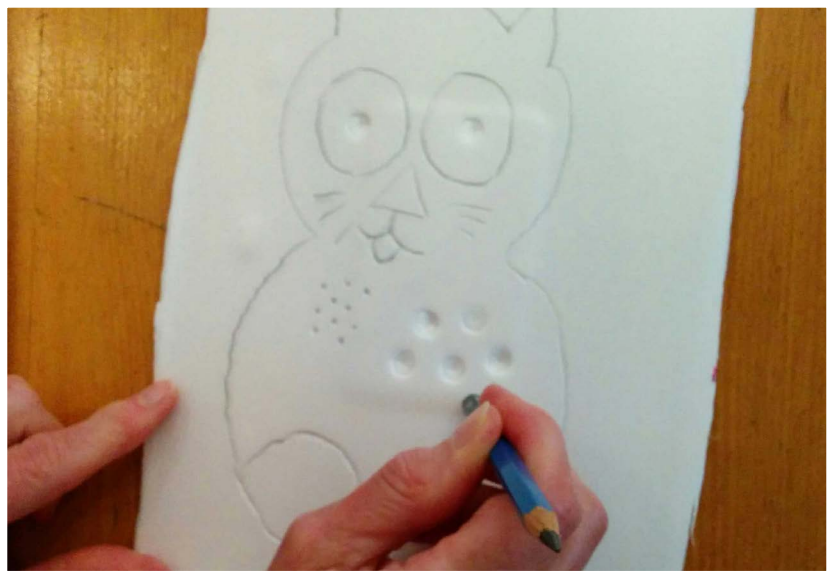
If your lines are not deep enough, the paint will go into them and you will not see your picture. You can always go over your lines and make them a little deeper. Feel them with your finger to ensure that they are deep enough.

Note: This is a relief printing process. Relief means that the colour is on the surface. The lines or marks are drawn into the styrofoam and are below the surface and will become the colour of the paper.



Step 4:

Adding texture, pattern and design to your plate. Use the sharpened tip of your pencil to make little dots. Use the flat or eraser end to make larger dots. Draw in a variety of lines to make designs and patterns.

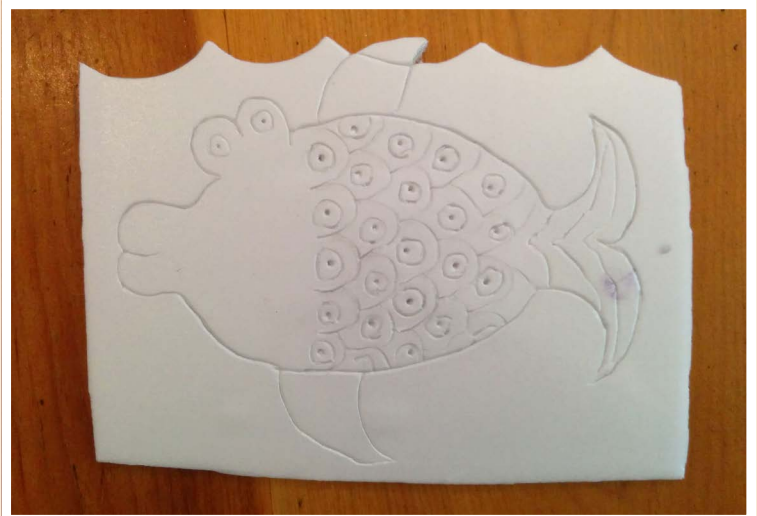


Step 5:

The Cat: The cat is sitting in the grass. Little triangles are cut with scissors at the bottom of the plate, creating a negative shaped design that represents grass. The top of the plate is rounded. Use your pencil to draw the shape you plan to remove. Then draw deeper and deeper, and the part you would like to remove will come off without breaking the plate.

The Fish: The top of the plate is cut in a wave design. The fish looks like it is in water. The waves were first drawn with a pencil and then drawn again deeper and deeper so that the styrofoam was removed carefully, creating a smooth edge (without breaking or tearing the styrofoam plate).

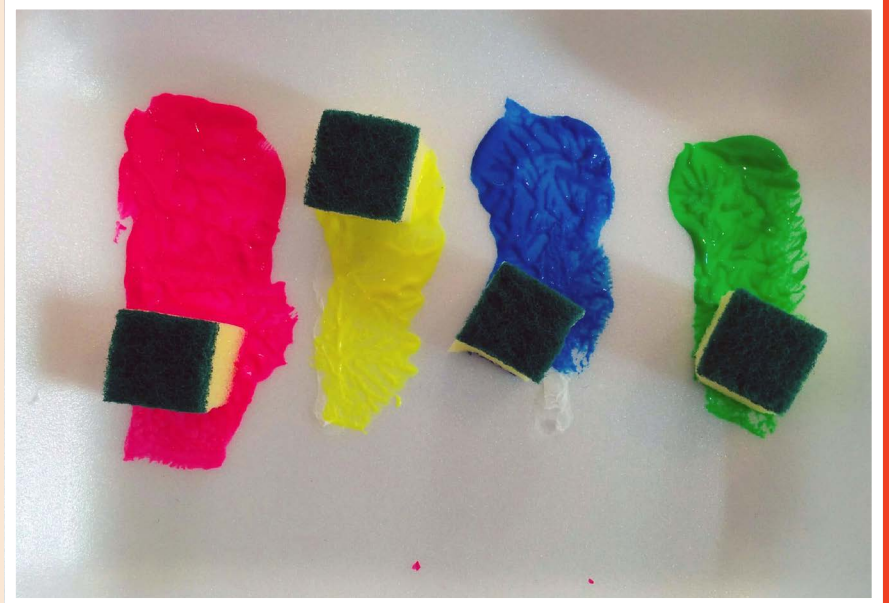
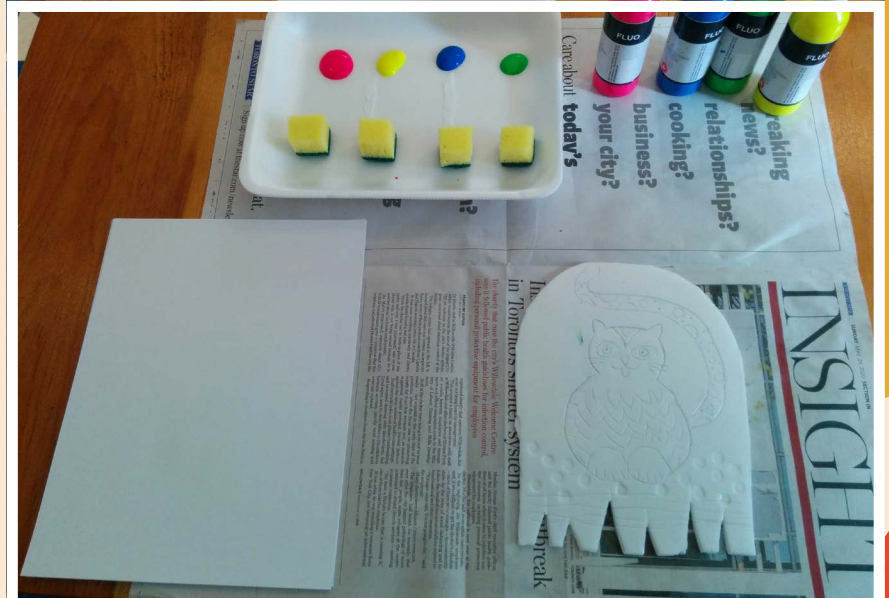
The Monster: The plate is shaped like the monster. Draw the shape with your pencil first, and then go over the lines and press deeper and deeper until the styrofoam is removed without breaking or tearing the plate.



Step 6:

Setting up your printing area. Spread newspaper on a table to keep the area clean. Bring out a few colours of tempera or acrylic paint. You will need to put your paint out on something flat – a lid, a plate, or another styrofoam plate. Cut up a sponge into four small rectangles. The small pieces of sponge will be used to apply the paint to the styrofoam plate (one sponge for each colour of paint). You will need some paper to print on. You may want to use 8.5" x 11" bond paper (computer paper) or paper from a sketch book.

Applying the paint to the plate. It is important to ensure that the paint does not go into the lines. Prepare your paint by spreading it out into a thin layer before you apply it on your plate. Then using your sponge, cover the surface of the plate with a thin layer of paint. Make sure the paint is applied to the surface of the plate and not in the lines or marks. You can add layers of different colours.



Step 7:

Registering your print will help centre your picture on the paper. Start by placing a piece of paper in the middle of your printing area. The paper should be the same size as the paper you will use for your print. Place your painted plate face up in the middle of a piece of paper.

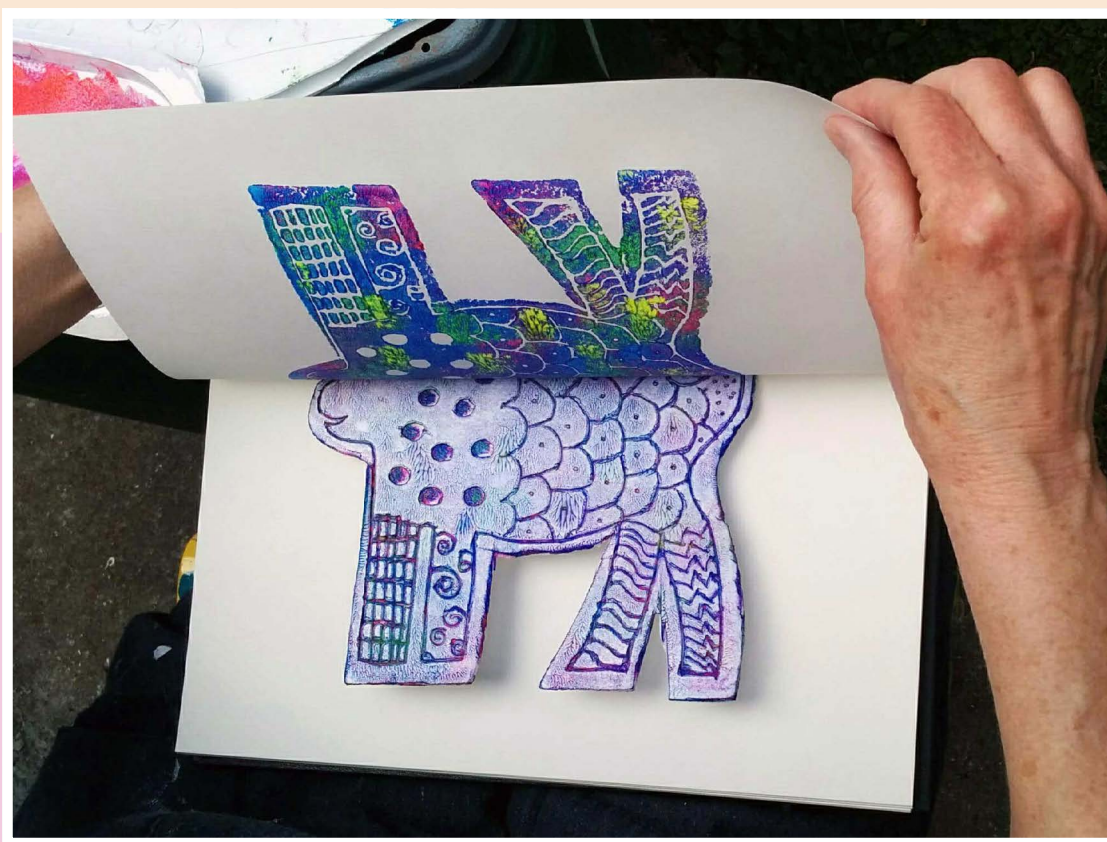
Now place another piece of paper on your plate, making sure that it matches up with the first piece of paper. Gently rub the whole surface of the plate. You can feel the plate underneath the paper so make sure you carefully rub over the surface right to the edges.



Step 8:

Carefully peel off the paper to reveal your beautiful print!

Note: You don't need to wash your plate in between prints. Water will dissolve your paint and ruin your prints. Usually, there is not much paint left on the plate after a print. If you feel you have excess paint on your plate and you want to make a new print with different colours, just wipe your plate with a dry paper towel or cloth. Try not to get the paint in the lines.



Extensions:

- Experiment with the printing process by adding different colours to your plate. Try to layer colours. You could blend colours directly on your plate.
- Think of a title for your print. Using a pencil, centre your title just below your image. Sign your name on the right side of the title and include the year you made the print (2020).

