

Ancient Greek Relief Print

Create a print utilizing ancient Greek designs and patterns.

ARTventures
... at home!



The so-called Dayton Painter (Greek, active 6th century BCE), *Amphora*, about 520 BCE, terra cotta with black figure style decoration. Museum purchase. 1963.84

Materials Needed

- pencil
- eraser
- masking tape
- paper towels
- palette knife
- printmaking brayer
- plastic kitchen spoon
- newsprint paper, 9 x 12
- drawing paper, 4 x 6, 3-4 sheets
- styrofoam relief plate, 4 x 6
- plexiglass sheet, approx. 8 x 10, with taped edges
- water-soluble relief printmaking ink, black
- orange construction paper or cardstock, 6 x 9, approx. 5 sheets
- white oil pastel or crayon (optional)
- black marker (optional)

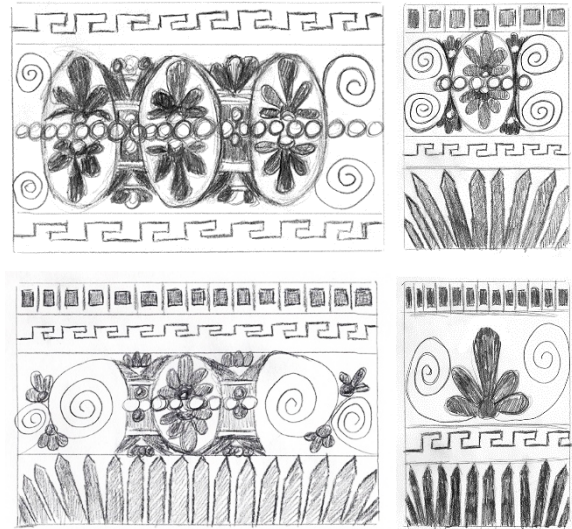
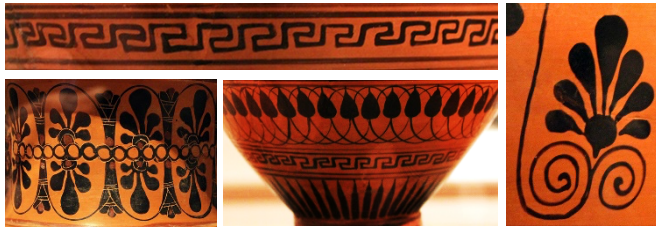


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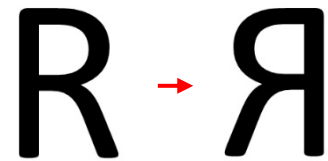
Step 1

Using a pencil and drawing paper, create several design ideas for your print. Incorporate traditional Greek patterns (pictured below) or create your own designs inspired from these patterns. Select the best idea and draw it in detail onto a 4 x 6 piece of drawing paper.



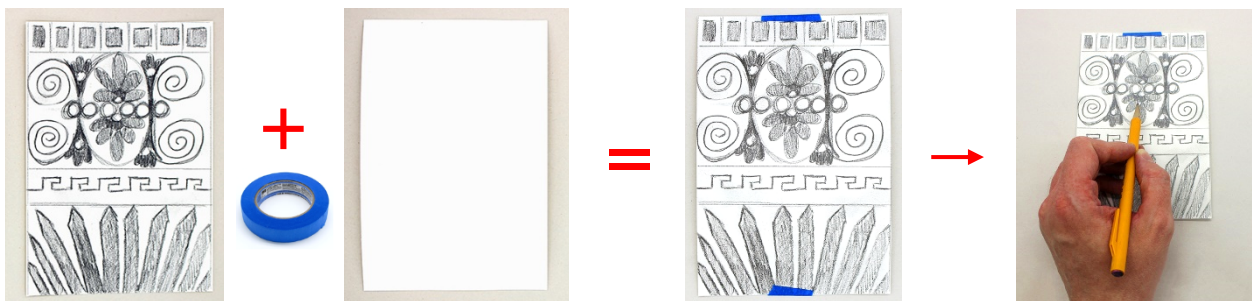
Helpful hint: keep overall design large and simple. For best printing results, intricate details are not recommended. Have patterns fill the entire page and use several different patterns for variety in the print.

Note: drawing will be reversed when printed (ex: a flower drawn on the right will appear on the left in the print). Keep patterns symmetrical as much as possible. Lettering is not recommended (if lettering is desired, words and letters must be written backwards to appear correct on the print).

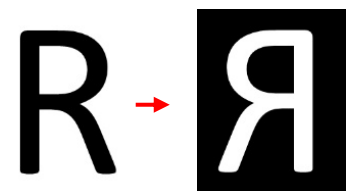


Step 2

Tape drawing onto styrofoam relief plate. Trace over entire drawing with pencil. Press firmly. If needed, use a colored pencil or pen to trace over drawing to best see areas already traced.



Note: Lines drawn in styrofoam cannot be erased. All marks drawn will also be inverted when printed (areas drawn into the foam will be the color of the paper, any areas left untouched on the foam will be black). To create a black line, shade in the space directly around the line, leaving the foam for the line itself untouched.

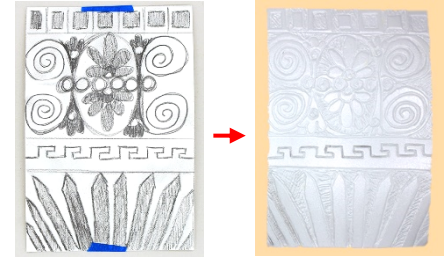


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Step 3

Remove drawing from styrofoam relief plate. Redraw lines as necessary and press firmly to ensure all lines are carved deep enough (if lines cannot be easily felt with a finger, they will need to be carved deeper).

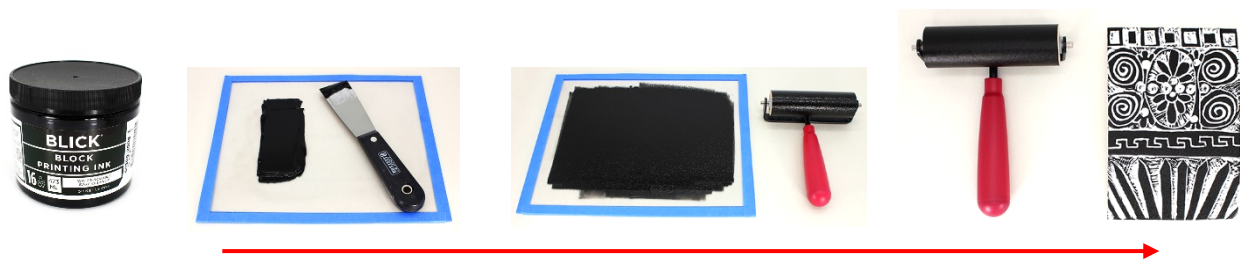


Step 4

Use a palette knife to spread a small amount of black printmaking ink onto the plexiglass. Roll ink with brayer until the ink is a smooth and even consistency. Place styrofoam relief plate on a sheet of newsprint, carved side up. Gently roll inked brayer over the carved side of the styrofoam relief plate until plate is fully covered with ink.

Note: tape sharp edges of plexiglass before use. Wash ink from plexiglass, brayer, and palette knife with water once finished.

Helpful hint: to ensure brayer is evenly covered with ink, lift it off the plexiglass and re-roll the ink in different directions rather than back and forth in only one direction.



Step 5

Place sheet of orange construction paper directly onto the inked side of the styrofoam plate. Place a spoon onto the paper. Place fingers inside the dish of the spoon, pressing and rubbing into the paper with a circular motion from top to bottom and edge to edge. Once the paper is fully rubbed, gradually peel the paper away to reveal the print.



Note: if your print appears **faded**, then more ink or more pressure is needed while rubbing with the spoon. If print is **blurry** or **too dark**, too much ink may have been applied or paper may have shifted while rubbing it with the spoon.



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Helpful hint: for best control of the styrofoam's position on the paper, place inked styrofoam directly onto the paper in position desired. Flip the paper over with the styrofoam attached so the paper side is back on top, then rub with a spoon to print.

Step 6 (optional)

For best results, repeat steps 4 and 5 until several prints are achieved (approx. 4-5 prints are recommended as experimentation will be needed for best results). Add more details to finished prints with a white oil pastel or black marker if desired. Other colors can be used as well.



Extra Challenge

Try a variety of paper colors for many variations of the original print.
Create a new print including people doing an activity (ex: playing musical instruments).

Resources

- [Learn more about the DAI's Greek Amphora](#)
- [Discover how Greek pottery was made](#)
- [Learn how to draw the Greek meander pattern](#)
- [See the styrofoam printmaking process](#)

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Questions about or ideas for ARTventures? Email edu@daytonart.org