

African Mudcloth Printing

Grade Level: Grades 4-6
Cross-Curricular - Art and Social Studies
Multicultural

Description:

This lesson uses a stamping technique to replicate a beautiful form of fabric painting called "bogolanfini" done by the Bamana tribe of Mali. The traditional method uses cotton fabric woven by the men of the tribe. The women follow a centuries-old method that involves painting traditional designs on the fabric with iron-rich mud that dyes the fabric. The results are striking black and white designs that have become popular on the world market. Younger artists are now using colors as well as white for the background color. Each cloth tells a story revealed by the use of the traditional symbols and their placement on the cloth. The bogolanfini are used in ceremonies for both men and women. Your class will create stamps in traditional and non-traditional designs and will share their stamps with one another to make their own mudcloth design.

Objectives:

Students will learn about the mudcloth made by the Bamana tribe of Mali.
Students will learn a stamping technique to replicate the African designs.

Materials:

- Staedtler Mastercarve Classroom Pack, Box of 27, 1-1/2" x 1-1/2" (402627-705)
- Cutter Handles (380969-705)
- Assorted Linoleum Cutters, Set of 5 (407536-705)
- Sax True Flow Water Soluble Block Printing Ink, Black, 8-Oz. Jar (461924-705)
- Styrofoam Printmaking Trays Pkg. of 250, 11" x 9" x 1" (467732-705)
- Fadeless All-Purpose Art Paper Assortment, 12" x 18", 60-Sheet Pkg. (006093-705)
- Utility Knife, No. 24, Med. Duty (401111-705)
- Stack-A-Pad Washable Stamp Pads, 8-Color Set (443525-705)
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Scissors



Directions:

1. Discuss the mudcloth of the Bamana tribe with your class. Additional information can be found on the Internet. Each student should have a carving block.
2. Choose a traditional design or create your own. See traditional designs in diagram #1. If you choose to do narrow (1/2" x 1") design, cut the block in half with the utility knife (adult supervision is necessary). Draw the design in heavily applied pencil exactly the same size as the block.
3. Turn the design over and place it on the block. Rub over the back of the paper with the side of a pencil so that the design transfers to the block.
4. Use the carving tools to carve the lines in the block.
5. Cut the Fadeless paper to 12" x 12".
6. Measure 1/2" in from all sides of the paper and lightly draw a line. This will be the outside edge of the design. Do not stamp outside of it.
7. Begin stamping by using a 1" x 1" stamp on both side edges of the paper. These are the "arms". (See diagram 2.) Use a 1/2" x 1" stamp for the bottom and top edge. Leave a space for at least 2 rows of four 1" x 1" stamps in the top center area or "mother". Measure in 1/2" from the side rows for the placement of these stamps. Leave room at the bottom for at least one row of 1" x 1" stamps centered like the stamps in the "mother" area. This bottom section is the "leg". Use the 1/2" x 1" to divide or outline sections horizontally. (This is a close approximation of the traditional design layout and allows for some invention on the part of the student artists.)

National Art Standards:

Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.

Grade 5-8: Students will intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

Content Standard #3: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Grade 5-8: Students will describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts.