

Glue-Relief Plaster Cast Printmaking

Glue it, cast it, print it! Ingeniously transfer a hardened glue "painting" into a plaster printing plate.

Plaster printmaking plates have been around for many generations, though the process is not often taught or well known at all. Traditionally, oil paint is used to create a resist, where the poured plaster is repelled by the oil, thus transferring the image in relief. Oil paint, however, is messy to clean up, requires hazardous solvents, and can be toxic. As such, it is not often found in classrooms.

In this lesson, tacky glue is used to safely paint an image that will transfer to the plaster. When the glue is dry, the plaster can be poured into the mold. The glue will become a bit tacky from the wet plaster, but will leave an imprint and can even be used to make multiple plaster plates. The original mold for the plaster can also be used to print, allowing students to learn about positive and negative shapes, in addition to image mirroring!

Speedball Fabric and Paper Block Printing Ink is an oil-based ink that can be cleaned up easily without harsh solvents and will not make the plaster plate soggy or damp. Simply use a damp paper towel to clean it when making multiple prints. Densite Plaster backed with burlap adds to the durability and longevity of the printing plate.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Cut drafting film into 6" x 8" sheets.
2. Show images of different kinds of printmaking. Explain positive and negative shapes. For example, if a line is made by the glue, it will be a recessed line on the plaster plate and will not receive ink.

Process

1. Measure one inch in on each side and fold.
2. Make an image using Aleene's Original Tacky Glue on Drafting Film. Drafting film is semi-transparent, so students may wish to sketch an image first and trace it onto the draft film. The tacky glue can be brushed on, or squeezed from a bottle. Be sure not to extend the image past the 1" folded margin. This will be the side of the mold for the plaster and will not print. Allow the glue to dry.
3. Create a shallow box to serve as a mold for the plaster plate. Using the fold line as a guide, cut from the edge to the corner of the opposite fold line. Make one cut for each of the four corners to make a flap on each side. Fold the flap around the side and tape it along the outside. Do this for each of the four corners.
4. Individual batches of plaster should be mixed for each student, as they will set quickly. Scoop about one cup of plaster into a plastic cup. Slowly add water to the plaster, stirring constantly until it is the thickness of a heavy cream. Pour plaster into the mold, filling as close to the top as possible without spilling over. Let any remaining plaster dry in the cup and tap out over a trash can to reuse the cup. Never rinse unused plaster in the sink as it will harden and clog.



Materials (required)

- Densite Plaster, 25 lb (33537-1025); share one bag across class
- Natural Burlap, 46" x 1 yd (63202-1436); share across class
- Aleene's Original Tacky Glue, 16 oz (23884-1016); share two bottles across class
- Grafix Drafting Film, Matte .005" 24" x 36" (55521-1005); share two sheets across class
- Blick White Bristle Set, 6-pack (05175-0069); share four sets across class
- Speedball Fabric and Paper Block Printing Ink, assorted colors 2.5 oz (40326-); share at least four across class
- Scratch-Art Rubber Brayers, soft (40113-1000); one per student
- Yasutomo Japanese Rice Paper Sheets, 9 1/2" x 13" , 100 sheets (12744-1013); one sheet per student

Optional Materials

- Detailer Writers pkg of 6 (32929-1009)
- Plastic 10-Well Paint Tray (03041-1010)





Process, continued

5. Place burlap on top of the plaster after it has begun to set (usually after about 3-5 minutes.) If the burlap begins to sink into the plaster, remove it and wait a few more minutes.
6. When fully set, remove the tape and unfold the box to release the plaster block.
7. Spray with Krylon Low Odor Gloss Varnish. This allows for easy cleanup of the plaster plate.
8. To print the plaster block, use a brayer to evenly spread Speedball Fabric and Paper Block Printing Ink onto an inking plate or any other smooth surface.
9. Roll the inked brayer evenly over the plaster block, moving both ways across the image.
10. Place the inked block face-down and centered on the paper. Carefully turn the paper and plaster plate over. Smooth gently with hands over the inked area with hands. A baren is not needed, as it is too hard and may damage the plaster plate.
11. To print the mold, simply cut off the sides, following the folded line. Follow steps 6 and 8, although here a baren may be used for printing.
12. To finish, use color pencils or markers to add color and embellishments. Both pieces can be mounted side by side on mat board to accentuate the mirrored image and reversal of positive and negative spaces.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Responding

Anchor Standard 8: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



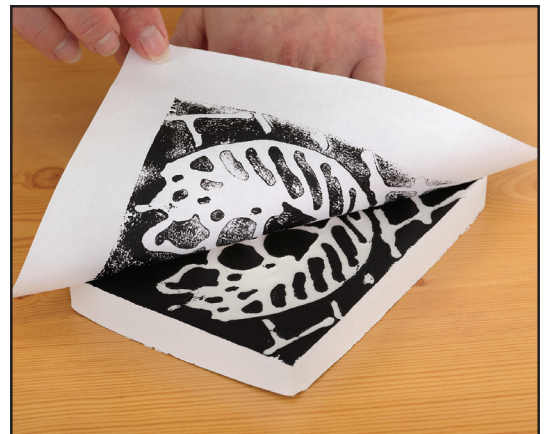
Step 1: Use glue to paint image.



Step 2: Cut corners and fold into a box.



Step 3: Mix plaster and pour into mold.



Step 4: Print.