

Block Printed Sun Deity

Use sun-sensitive dyes to block print a solar deity on muslin

(art + science; art + history)

The sun has been an important aspect of many cultures for thousands of years and beyond. In fact, sun worship is evident throughout most of recorded history. A solar deity, also sometimes called a sun god or goddess, is a deity who embodies the perceived power and strength of the sun itself. Although many religions of the world revolve around the solar cycle, sun worship is most often associated with “pagan” religions.

Ancient Egypt is probably the most widely known sun-worshipping culture. The sun god Ra was the dominant god in Egyptian tradition. In Hinduism, the god Surya represented the sun and was portrayed as an all-seeing god who shed light on both good and evil actions. Worship of the sun was also incredibly important in early Roman culture, eventually resulting in “solar monotheism,” which is almost total worship of the sun.

The Native American Sun Dance, which was carried out at winter’s end, is one of the most well-known ceremonies regarding the sun. Sun gods have been named in mythologies from the Aztecs to the ancient Chinese, who believed there were 10 suns who were all brothers.

Harness the power of the sun to create artwork worthy of the gods! But, instead of using the dye to make solar prints with objects, the dye is brushed onto various block prints and rubbing plates, pressed onto fabric, and then exposed to sunlight. The dye is almost clear right out of the bottle, but a quick exposure will reveal one of 14 different colors!

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



Materials (required)

Unbleached Muslin, 45" x 1 yd (63987-1001); share 3 yards across class (1/8 yard per student)

Jacquard SolarFast, 4 oz (48933-); share at least five bottles of varying colors across class

Speedball Speedy Carve Blocks, 3" x 4" (60283-1034); need one per student for face of deity

Princeton Hake brush, 1" (05415-1001); share five across class

Speedball Linoleum Cutter Handle (40201-); need one per student

Speedball Linoleum Cutters, No. 5 Large U Gouge, 12-pack (40203-1012); share one package across class

Speedball Linoleum Cutters, No. 1 Small V, 12-pack (40203-1212); share one package across class

Tonic Studios Arts & Crafts Plus Scissors, 5" long (57079-1005); share five across class

Roylco Rubbing Plate Sets (61112-) Suggest: Textures (61112-3000) Animal skins (61112-6000) or Optical Illusions (61112-9000); share at least two sets across class

Aleene's Quick Dry Tacky Glue, 4 oz (23884-1104); share five bottles across class

Canson Mi-Teintes Drawing Papers, package of 25, 8-1/2" x 11", Black (10710-2690); one piece per student

Optional Materials

Blick Studio Markers (22148-)

Saral Wax Free Transfer Paper, Red (12917-3012)

Polyester Flufferfill (66902-1006)

Creativity Street Wooden Dowel Rods (60448-)

Amaco Stonex (33247-)



Preparation

1. View images of sun deities throughout history.
2. Provide each student with 1/8 yard of muslin.

Process

1. Draw a sketch of a sun god or goddess face and head within a 3" x 4" area. Transfer the drawing to a block of Speedy Carve using transfer paper, if desired. As an alternative, draw directly onto the printing block with a black marker. Color in the areas of the print that should NOT be carved away to help visualize the carving process.
2. Carve away any areas that should not be printed using carving tools. Be sure to carve away from the body, or use a bench hook if desired.
3. Using a 1" brush, apply SolarFast dye directly to the carved block. Place a piece of muslin over the block and apply even pressure with a hand or baren to transfer the print.
4. Expose the print to sunlight to develop the color of the dye. This can be done immediately while the print is wet, or after the print has dried. Longer exposure times result in a deeper color.
5. Use the same process to create patterns on fabric by pressing rubbing plates that have been brushed with dye onto muslin. Another option is to use found textures to print onto muslin. Expose to the sun.
6. Now, combine the printed face of the sun deity with pieces of patterned muslin to create the rest of the body. Cut and glue parts onto black paper.

Options

- Make a 3-D Deity adding a back side. Glue the front to the back, stuff, and display on a dowel rod held up with air-hardening clay.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating (Investigate, Plan, Make)

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

Connecting (Synthesize)

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



Step 1: Carve the face of a sun deity onto a Speedy Carve block.



Step 2: Brush SolarFast onto the block, then press it onto muslin. Expose under sunlight to develop color.



Step 3: Use texture plates in the same manner to create patterned fabrics to add to the Sun Deity.