



***From Weave to Web: West African Textiles from the
Christopher Roy '70 and Nora (Leonard '69) Roy Collection***

October 28 - December 12, 2009

The Richard F. Brush Art Gallery
St. Lawrence University

Educational Outreach

Suggested Audience: College and Advanced High School Art Students

The Brush Gallery invites students to view the *Roy Collection of West African Textiles* from October 28 to December 12, 2009. Students will have an opportunity to examine textiles and garments from the Asanti, Mossi, and Yoruba ethnic groups, among others, learning about production methods and varied uses of fabrics and garments. Students will examine the collection both onsite and digitally. Special focus on the block-printed fabrics of the Asante people will lead students to create personal block-printed patterns.

Objectives:

- To introduce students to the Roy Collection through the Brush Gallery exhibition and Digital Image Collection.
- To familiarize students with the varieties of West African textiles, their production, uses, and meanings.
- To examine more specifically the symbols and meanings of symbols used in printed Asante adinkra cloth.
- To design and create a printed textile based on a personal symbol.

Project:

Personal Adinkra Cloth

Focus:

Design a personal symbol for an adinkra-inspired, block-printed textile pattern using Rubbercut, relief carving tools, and waterbased markers on paper .

Links:

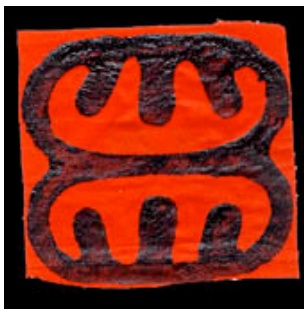
<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/ontheline/schools/adinkra/adinkrah.htm>

<http://www.ghanaculture.gov.gh/privatecontent/File/Adinkra%20Cultural%20Symbols%20of%20the%20Asante%20People.pdf>

Process:

- View and discuss Asante adinkra cloth and garments on display (and/or online).
- View traditional adinkra symbols (see handout printed from above Ghana culture website) and discuss their meanings. Consider how adinkra symbols on fabric can signify a proverb, convey a message, or represent a particular characteristic about the printer or the wearer. Relate this to our culture where we also use clothing to communicate our tastes, identity, or to suit a specific event or activity.
- Create a personal symbol, measuring 1.5” – 2” square, on paper. For ideas, consider your activities, interests, or a visual message you wish to communicate to others. Try to avoid common symbols (hearts, stars, suns, etc...) or copyrighted symbols. Symbols can have a border, as seen below, or not. Above all, keep your design simple, with near equal amounts of positive and negative spaces.

Ex. Traditional adinkra symbol



ESE NE TEKREMA

LITERALLY MEANS: THE TEETH AND THE TONGUE. THIS DESIGN SYMBOLIZES THE NEED FOR FRIENDLINESS AND INTERDEPENDENCE.

The negative spaces, seen in red, are carved out of the block. The positive spaces, in black, are inked.

- Fill in the positive spaces of your design in pencil. Redraw symbol on your Rubbercut stamp OR cut out paper design, invert on Rubbercut, then transfer by applying pencil pressure on the back of the paper. Lift off paper and clarify design in pencil again.
- Use a #2 Speedball linoleum cutter to carve away negative spaces (leave the positive pencil design!). Be careful not to carve too deeply.
- Use watercolor markers to “ink” the stamp. Practice repeat patterns on practice paper before creating the final pattern on better paper.

Learning Extensions:

Back in the classroom, this project can be expanded in any number of ways:

- Students might wish to explore different ink and paper color combinations.
- Consider a full-class project where students create a whole textile divided in traditional sections that feature each student’s patterns.
- Create a Chuck Close-inspired self-portrait using the stamp as a repeat tool.

Dick Blick Supplies:

Blick E-Z Cut Printing 9” x 12” blocks (cut into 1.5” squares) or 4” x 6” blocks (for 2” squares)

Speedball #2 Cutters (blades)

Speedball handles

Crayola waterbased markers (broadline tip)