



# Printmaking with Foam

This exploration is designed for all ages, but young children may need assistance from an adult.



**Prints** are made by creating a design on a master plate and then by various techniques transferring the design to another surface, using ink or paint, paper and pressure. Many printmaking processes allow multiple images to be printed from one master plate. Some materials that can become a master plate are linoleum, wood, stone, metal, Styrofoam, cardboard and plastic.

Eric Carle, Antonio Frasconi and Mary Azarian have used printmaking to create pictures for their books. In this activity, Styrofoam is used as a master plate to explore the printmaking process.

## MATERIALS USED IN THE STUDIO

- white drawing paper
- pieces of Styrofoam from veggie or meat trays
- carving tools: ball point pens, wooden dowels, clay modeling sticks
- tempera paint
- washable stamp pad (see below)



## Make and re-use your own stamp pad:

- Duct tape the back of a finely-holed kitchen sponge or piece of upholstery foam to a plastic plate or (clean) foam meat tray. Use a spatula to spread washable tempera paint into the sponge.
- Seal the pad in a plastic bag to reuse it again the next day. Add more paint as needed. If you don't plan to use the stamp pad again within a week, let it air dry before storing. Re-activate it with a spritz of water and some fresh paint.



## PROCESS

- **Begin** by thinking about how you would like your printed image to look. If you've never tried making prints this way before, start simple.
- **Carve your image onto your plate.** That means, use the carving tools to draw your image on a piece of Styrofoam. As you draw, press the tool into the foam hard enough to make impressed marks, but not so hard you break the foam. Keep in mind that your image will print in reverse!
- **Press** your plate (carved Styrofoam) onto a stamp pad or roll paint on with a brayer. Check to see that it's covered with paint or ink.
- **Press** your Styrofoam on your paper and lift it up. You're using your design like a stamp.
- Make a ghost print by stamping your plate again without re-inking it.



## WHAT MORE CAN YOU MAKE?

- Try printing on different paper, or even fabric.
- Carve back into your plate. Try using different tools, like paperclips or a fork, from around the house.
- Try stamping one image on top of another or with more than one color.
- What happens if you draw on your paper before or after printing on it?
- Tell a story using your prints.