

Drawing the Collection Lesson 16 – Block Printing

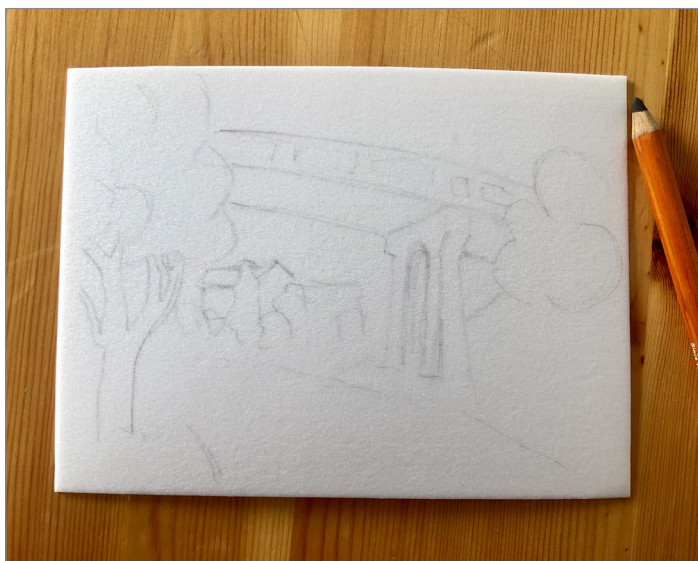
Did you know you can make prints using the styrofoam from a food takeout container? Try this fun project from home based on a print from the Museum's permanent collection, Dietrich Neufeld's *Plum Street Bridge*.



For this project, you'll need the following: a few sheets of loose sketchbook paper, a flat sheet of thin styrofoam cut down slightly smaller than the paper, water soluble block printing ink (or substitute acrylic paint), brayer (or substitute a 4" foam paint roller), masking tape, aluminum foil, a soft, dull pencil or charcoal pencil, and a ballpoint pen.



Dietrich Neufeld | PLUM STREET BRIDGE | linoleum block print on paper | 8.25 x 11.25 | 1947 | Unknown donor



1. Very lightly sketch your design onto the sheet of styrofoam with the pencil or charcoal pencil. Try not to make any grooves into the surface, as these will show up later in the print. Keep in mind that the image will appear backwards after printing.



2. Next, draw your design using the ballpoint pen with some pressure. This will create an impression on the surface of the styrofoam and will not receive any ink when rolled. Keep in mind, areas you are covering with pen will be the white lines, and the untouched surface of the styrofoam will be solid black (or whatever color of ink you are using).

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3. Roll a brayer up with ink. This can be easily done at home by taping a piece of aluminum foil to a table, apply a small amount of ink, and use the brayer to roll in several directions to get an even distribution of ink. Roll the inked brayer over your printing plate. This may need to be repeated to build up a good surface of ink.



4. Place a sheet of paper on top of the inked plate and carefully rub the back, using circular motions and applying light, even pressure.



It can take a bit of practice to get the right amount of ink and pressure combination, so be patient and keep practicing until you pull a good print. You can use this method to print on an assortment of surfaces – cards, stationary, canvas totes.... Have fun with it!