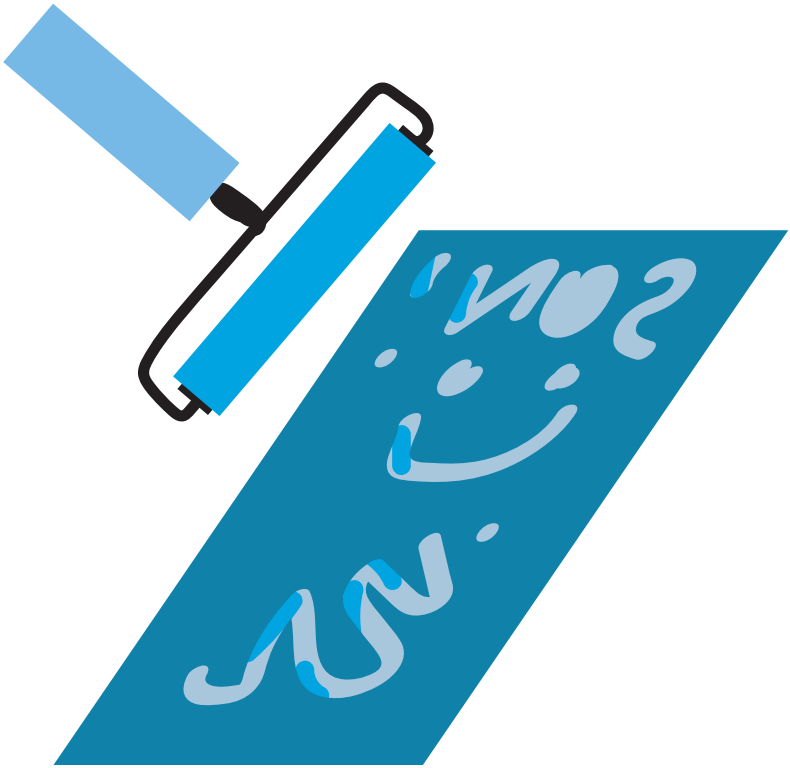
Printmaking with styrofoam

and other accessible tools

a workshop made by Pilli Lopez



our tools

styrofoam (our matrix)

pencils, pens, markers

wooden spoon

paper - our substrate

some fabric towels

What is printmaking?

Printmaking is the more hands-on process of taking an image from what we call a matrix, and transferring it onto a substrate that can hold ink.

Printmaking Terminology

Printmaker/printer - the person who is participating in the printmaking process. aka YOU

Matrix - The physical surface that holds our design and to which ink is applied.

Brayer - A roller used to evenly spread ink upon a matrix

Proof - A test print that can be pulled using a lesser substrate, such as copy paper, scrap paper, newsprint, or even magazine pages.

Monoprint - A print that is not replicable by design. Often not made using a matrix with a design on it, but instead a blank matrix to be customized for each print***Registration*** - Guides you can add to ensure that your matrix and substrate are aligned. Often used for multiple color prints as well to ensure that the matrix and substrate align for proper application of next design layer.

Relief printing - A method of printmaking in which printmaker takes a flat matrix and creates indentations via carving or some other method resulting in the removal of a negative image and a positive relief. The most well known forms of this method are Woodblock/woodcut and linocut.

Substrate - The surface to which the ink/paint is being applied. This can be paper, wood, fabric, or anything else.

Positive space - space on the substrate that is marked by ink.

Negative space - the space removed from the matrix or the space on substrate that is left without ink

Our methodology

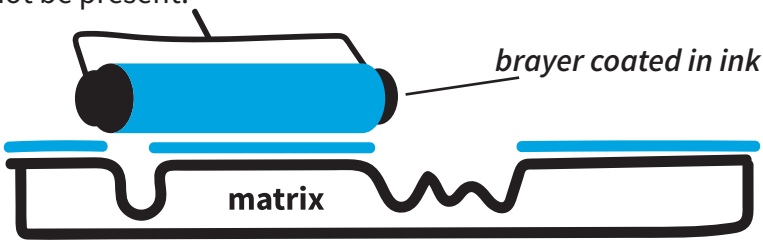
AKA instructions

Step 0: Preparations

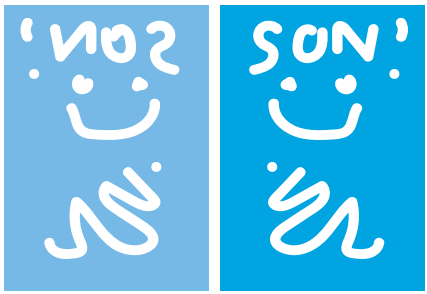
First we make sure our tools are all in order. Close to us and more or less clean

Step 1: Preparing our matrix

We take our matrix and use some form of mark making tool to make indentations. This creates a change in surface you can feel. The indentations will create our negative space. Where the ink will not be present.



As a form of relief the way that it works is that whatever design you make, will appear reversed. So any text that you plan on having in your design needs to be reversed.

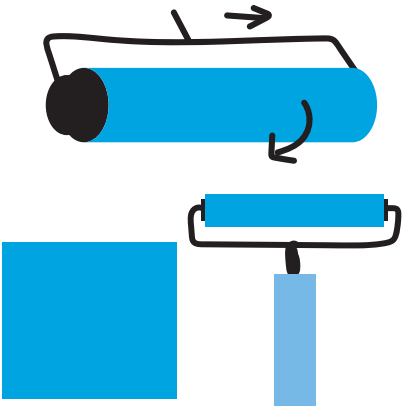


matrix *print*

Once your matrix has the finished design is actually done comes working with ink.

If you are interested in mono print without a recurring design this step can be skipped to keep your styrofoam nice and smooth.

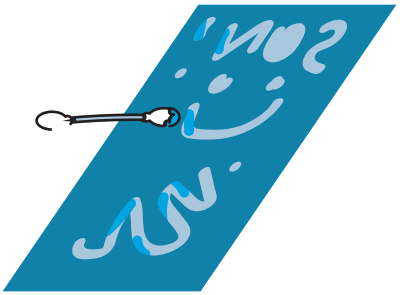
Step 2: Inking



You put your ink/paint on a surface and spread it to the width of your brayer. You'll want to roll your Brayer to create a square about the size of the brayer itself. Keep rolling the same direction to properly spread the ink along the brayer.

With an even layer of ink on the brayer, use it to apply a layer of ink onto the matrix. If you're using paint that isn't particularly thick there is a solid chance that you will end up with some ink running into your design. If that happens feel free to use a Q tip or small fabric to tidy it up.

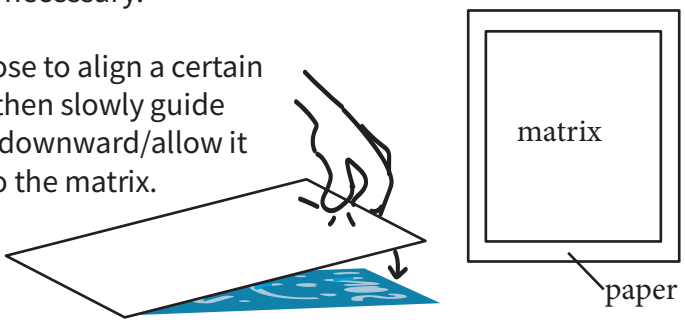
Sometimes this is an unavoidable extra step.



Step 3: Paper placing

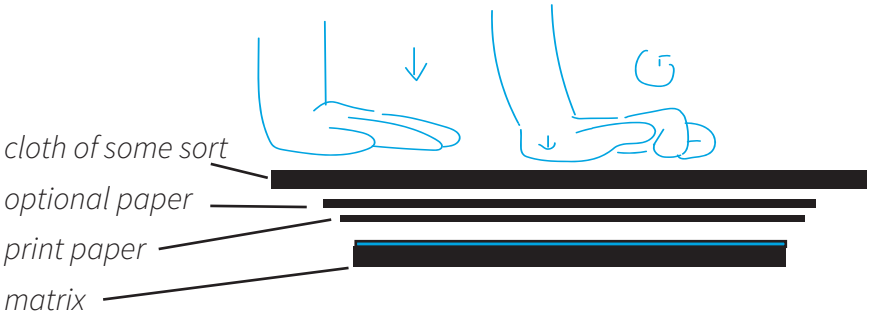
Your matrix is now ready to go into print. go to whatever area you have your printing setup and place your substrate on your matrix as centered as possible. If you want to you can place some extra papers atop your print, it can help with the evenness of the print, but it isn't necessary.

Many choose to align a certain edge and then slowly guide the paper downward/allow it to fall onto the matrix.



Step 4: Printing

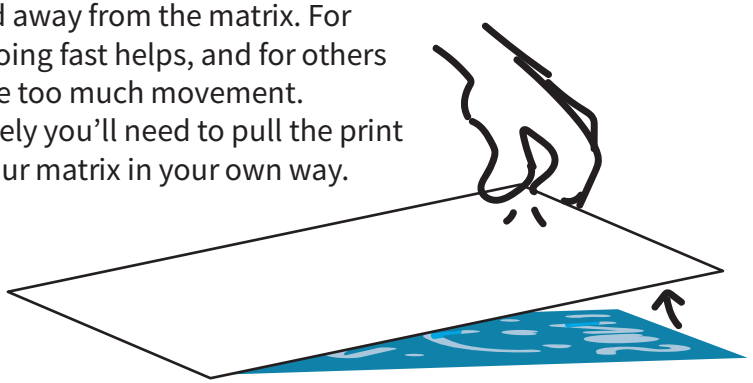
Place your printing fabric/cloth/blanket above your print and then apply pressure. The cheapest way to apply the necessary pressure is to press down using your hands. Ideally your palms. If your fabric is sturdy enough applying in circles can give a more even transfer, but does run the risk of moving something under your hands. if you are worried and able, Pressure can be applied via rolling pin.



Once you've finished applying pressure you remove any papers and fabrics from it and then its time for the next step.

Step 5: Pull and Waiting

Grabbing your print from one of the corners, gently pull your print towards you and away from the matrix. For some going fast helps, and for others it can be too much movement. Ultimately you'll need to pull the print from your matrix in your own way.



With that you have pulled a print! Place your new print off to the side somewhere for it to dry for a bit. The amount of ink and thickness of your substrate will play large factors in how long the drying time will be. I recommend placing your print face up on a flat surface until fully dry for the best results.

If you have limited substrate supplies or are new to the practice, it is wise to pull some proofs before using your fine paper. It helps build your skill and allows for any necessary trial and error without wasting precious supplies.

Step 6: Editioning

Once your print has dried it is time to edition.

For those who choose to make multiple reproductions be sure you count how many you want to be included and which you would rather have as artist proofs.

the edition number / however many total goes on the left.

Your work's title goes in quotations in the center.

Your maker's mark or signature goes on the right.

edition number	"title"	signature/ makers mark

This is how I do it. I know some people/institutions reverse the title and the edition number.

If you chose to make a mono print s or have more works that you don't quite consider part of a larger body that you've printed. prints that don't quite fit, you can always put A/P for artist proof or A/E artist's edition. It is up to you.

Now its done! Use this whenever you want and get funky with it. Make something weird, try out stuff that won't work. You won't know unless you experiment

websites I used for reference:

https://www.graphicstudio.usf.edu/gs/printmaking-terms.html

https://www.britannica.com/art/printmaking

https://handprinted.co.uk/blogs/blog/glossary-of-printmaking-terminology?srsltid=AYCX9vJK9JPgr-Fyc2axdqBqa4YSK5Ynh2t782HnOhegvSTqf-AaqG13

https://zam.umaine.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/96/2013/09/Printmaking-Glossary.pdf

https://libguides.getty.edu/felsengemini/printglossary

https://www.printcenternewyork.org/glossary

Pilli Lopez

Illustrator Designer Comic Artist

@crowsandfrogs

crowsandfrogs.com

crowsandfrogsofficial@gmail.com

