

# Studio Saturdays: Fabric Stamps



*Athena (after Myron)* by Yinka Shonibare

Yinka Shonibare

*Athena (after Myron)*

2019

Fiberglass sculpture, fabric hand-painted with Batik pattern, and steel base plate

The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Gift of Barbara '68 and Theodore '68 Alford.

Image courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery

Yinka Shonibare (yin-KUH sho-NEH-bar-EH) is a British-Nigerian artist who uses Dutch wax batik (buh-TEEK) fabric to ask questions about where our clothes come from and the paths they take to get to us. Batik fabric has a fascinating history, as it was first created by the Dutch in the Netherlands to look like it came from Indonesia, a Southeast Asian country of islands. This fabric was then made on a large scale, or was mass-produced, and sold to the Dutch colonies in West Africa. A colony describes a group of people who move to another place and put themselves in charge of the people who already lived there. Colonialism, or the practice of creating colonies, is a heavy topic and we encourage you to continue researching this topic if you are curious about learning more.

Because the Dutch colonies stayed in West Africa until the 1900s, batik fabric became embedded in West African culture and became a symbol of African identity, and later even a symbol of African freedom after the West African peoples won their independence from the colonies. Over time, the African peoples made batik fabrics their own by creating their own versions of them by dyeing their own patterns and including their own symbols in these patterns. By adding their own culture and developing the making of batik fabrics into an art form, the African peoples reclaimed them from the colonizers.

This complex history and batik fabric's continued use today are what draws Yinka Shonibare to it, as the fabric provides the perfect representation of globalization. Globalization is the word used to describe how the people and economies of different countries are connected across the world. Shonibare further signals his viewers to think about globalization by placing a globe on the head of Athena (after Myron).

**Today, we'll be designing our own patterned fabric. We'll first create stamps inspired by symbols from our personal lives, cultures, or memories. For example, my stamp is a palm tree because I grew up in North Palm Beach and when I think of it, I think about all of the palm trees. Think about how your stamp represents you, what you like, or where you come from!**

## THINK LIKE AN ARTIST

- 1) What symbol did you choose? Why?
- 2) How has learning about Yinka Shonibare's work changed how you see your clothes?

# LIST OF MATERIALS

- Foam Sheet

- Pencil

- Scissor

- Flat Wooden Square

\* You can also use a flat object like a piece of plastic, thick cardboard or an old cd

- Glue

- Brayer (Foam Roller)

- Foam Tray

- Paint

- Handkerchief or Fabric Square

\* You can also a sheet of paper if you do not have fabric at home

## INSTRUCTIONS

Begin by drawing your chosen symbol for your stamp on a foam sheet. Make sure to draw it in fragments, or sections, like a stencil. As you draw, press down hard into the foam so that it forms an indentation. This will make it easier to cut later.

Take a pair of scissors and cut out your stamp's segments. Make sure to keep them organized as you cut to make it easier to put back together later.

Reassemble your pieces onto a flat object; this will serve as your stamp block. You can use a wooden square but you can get creative and use something you already have at home that you wouldn't mind gluing stuff onto, like an old cd, a lid, or thick piece of cardboard.

Trace or mark the location of the pieces so you can set them back in the right spot when you glue them down.

Glue each of your pieces to your stamp block and allow to dry.

Apply paint to a flat disposable or cleanable surface. Foam trays work great as does a piece of plexi or plastic plate. Take your brayer and roll it into the paint with firm pressure to get an even coating.

Roll your brayer over your stamp to achieve an even coat on the stamp segments.

Place your piece of cloth (or paper, if you don't have any fabric) on a protected surface, as it may bleed through the other side. Lay your stamp facedown onto it and press down firmly and evenly.

Lift stamp carefully so that you do not shift it and there you have it! Your stamp!

Follow the same process to recreate multiple stampings onto your fabric or paper to create a patterned design like Shonibare. Make sure to reapply paint after every stamping so you do not end up with a faded stamp.

Rinse your brayer and stamp immediately after to preserve it.