# **Printing With Objects as an Imagemaking Technique**

## **Imagemaking**

In graphic design, you will frequently need to call upon your artistic skill and creative spirit to make your own images. Whether you include them in a professional composition for a client or as a showpiece, you need to develop a number of techniques to create images. The more you experiment with and master new techniques, the greater your range of design skills will be and the more your work will be sought after by clients.

While there is a wide world of techniques, we'll focus here on using objects as an imagemaking technique. We'll cover stamping, positive stenciling, scanning, and rubbing with a pencil, chalk, or charcoal.

## **Stamping and Stenciling**

Many of us have used a **stamping** technique at some point in our childhood. You take a porous material, dip it in paint or ink, then press it to your paper. You can use the raw shape of the object, such as stamping half an apple to create an apple image, or cut out sections and make a homemade stamp. If your paint is thick enough, you don't even need to use a porous object. You just coat the surface and press it into the paper.

| stamping***An example of stamping.*** |
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**Positive stenciling** an object, however, deals more with the area outside the object that the object itself. It's kind of like a photo negative. Let's say we use the same half of an apple that we would have used as a stamp. In stenciling, you still press it onto the paper. However, rather than the apple transferring paint in its shape, you can trace the outline of the apple or even spray paint the paper to leave a negative space in the shape of the apple.

| positive stenciling  ***Positive stenciling creates a negative image.*** |
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## **Scanning Images**

Experimentation is all part of the fun with image making. If you have a scanner, just set your objects on the glass and scan. You can even do this with an old photocopier and adjust the settings to make lighter, darker, and more unique images.

Another way to use objects when scanning is to create a collage. Assemble your various pieces together in a particular pattern, then scan the entire composition to create your print. As most of your objects will be three-dimensional, you will have a variety of textures in the finished product. Some surfaces will squish against the glass while others will have peaks and valleys highlighted by the light.

## **Rubbings**

Rubbing is a very old technique of printmaking with a wide variety of applications. Sometimes, people will use this on old headstones because it helps define words that may be too worn away to see under normal conditions.

| rubbing  ***Rubbing of an ancient Chinese headstone*** |
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You can use a variety of tools to do a rubbing, including pencils, charcoal, pastels, colored pencils, and even crayons. To explain, we'll use the example of a small block of artist's charcoal. In **rubbing**, you place your paper on top of the object you want to use and start running the charcoal back and forth over the surface but do so lightly at first. Where the object is raised, you will get a darker coloring.

If there are faintly carved letters, like on a headstone, the darkest parts will outline the carving with a negative space for the letters. If you have a small object under the paper, like a coin, the outline of the coin will be darkest and some of its features will be clearly noticeable.

You can also use this technique to create a textured pattern for an unrelated object. If you cut a piece of cardboard into the shape of a star and do a rubbing, you will clearly see a star shape. You will also have a pattern inside the star from the raised surfaces of the corrugated cardboard's inner layer.