

Scrimshaw Crayon Art

Scrimshaw is the technique of carving designs on the surface of bone, ivory, or baleen. Create scrimshaw-inspired art by etching designs on paper!



Materials Needed:

White paper, crayons, toothpick or paperclip.

Caution: Toothpicks and paper clips can be choking hazards. Closely supervise children during this activity.

Instructions:

Step 1: Cut a piece of white paper in half.

Step 2: Prepare your paper:

For Black-and-White Art: Color the paper with black crayon. Fill in all the white spaces, so that as little white as possible shows through the black.

For Rainbow Art: Cover a sheet of paper with different colored crayons. Use one color, or use several and make a design. Then completely cover the paper with black crayon, so that no colors show through.

Step 3: Make a design! Use a toothpick or paperclip to etch a design into the black crayon. Experiment with different patterns. If you colored the paper with rainbow crayons first, the colors will show through as you scrape the black away.

Hint: For young children, prepare the paper in advance. Older children may enjoy coloring the paper before making their designs.



Scrimshaw Art

Scrimshaw is the technique of carving on the surface of bone, ivory, or baleen. Artists usually use walrus tusks, whale bone, whale teeth, or baleen (bony plates in the mouths of some whale species). They carve or etch designs on the surface, and add ink to make the designs different colors.

Scrimshaw was popularized by sailors on whaling ships in the 1700s and 1800s, but today it is practiced by people all over the world. Common scrimshaw designs in Alaska include animals such as polar bears, seals, and caribou; and scenes of daily life such as hunting and dog sledding.



*Scrimshaw Whale Tooth by Gary Dorning
UA2015-019-0027AB*



*Scrimshaw on Baleen by Harry Apodruk
Burke Museum Collections, 1999-97/205*



*Scrimshaw on mineralized walrus ivory
by Peter Mayac: UA2001-018-0033*



*Incised Killer Whale Tooth
by Peter Mayac UA81-003-0048*



Scrimshaw cribbage board on walrus tusk by Billy Komonaseak, EH0717-0116