

Dogon Rock-Painting

art activity

The Dogon are an agrarian people who live in mountainous regions of southern Mali in west central Africa. One of the Dogon's many artforms is painting on cliffs. These cliff paintings or petroglyphs are made up of representations of mythical beings, ancestral figures, and sacred animals. The Dogon have a long tradition of watching the night sky and their religion is influenced by the movements of stars. Once every sixty years they celebrate the *Sigui*, a ceremonial reenactment of the creation of the world. This ceremony corresponds to the orbital cycle of the companion to the dog star Sirius. This white dwarf star, about whom the Dogon have known for centuries, was not observed by western scientists until the 1860's. The cliff paintings feature representations of a god who created humankind, whom they believe fell from the sky.

Materials

3" x5" rock (use smooth river stones), chalk, prisma colors colored pencils (traditional colors are earth-red, black, and off-white or ivory. Whatever color scheme you choose, limiting your design to three contrasting colors will make your design look better)

Dogon petroglyph design sheet

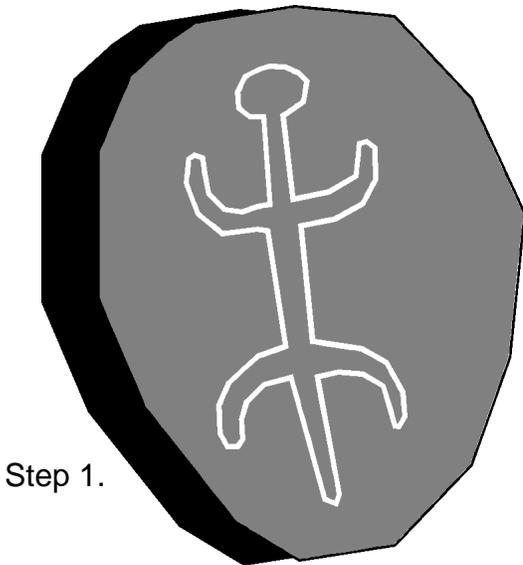
Process

Step 1. Select a stone. Let the size and shape of the stone determine the design. Draw your design using the sheet provided for ideas, or create one of your own. Draw your design in chalk. If you make a mistake rub the chalk off and start again. Use simple shapes and draw with a contour line.

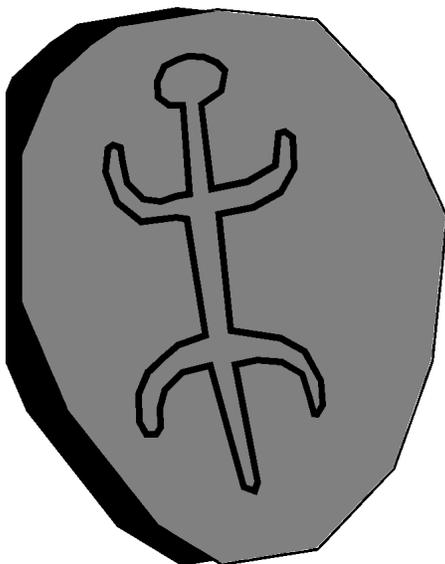
Step 2. Draw over the chalk line with black or another dark color making the line heavy, or thick.

Step 3. Fill the inside shape with the second color starting at its center and working your way toward the black line. Draw up to but not over the black line. Be careful not to smear the colors.

Step 4. Draw a line around the outside of the black line using the ivory or light colored pencils. Again, be careful not to smear the black.

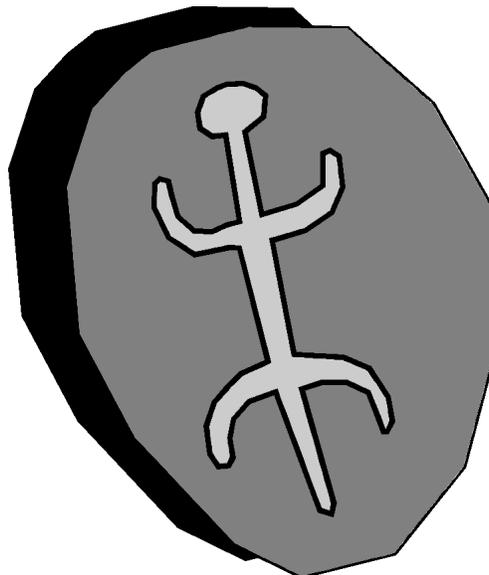


Step 1.



Step 2.

Step 3.



Step 4.

