



World of Art – Ghana – Adinkra

Here's What You Get!

- 1 Border Stamp
- 16 Symbol Stamps
- 2 Stamp Pads

Introduction

A long time ago in the West African country of Ghana, King Nana Kwadwo Agyemang Adinkra of the Bono people wanted to tell everyone that he was a wise and strong ruler. He invented a set of hundreds of different symbols and named the designs after himself – Adinkra. Each symbol meant something special such as love, courage, and friendship. The King worked with artists to make stamps from gourds and dyes from plants. The artists stamped the King's symbols on cloth. The stamped designs shared thoughts and told stories about the King.

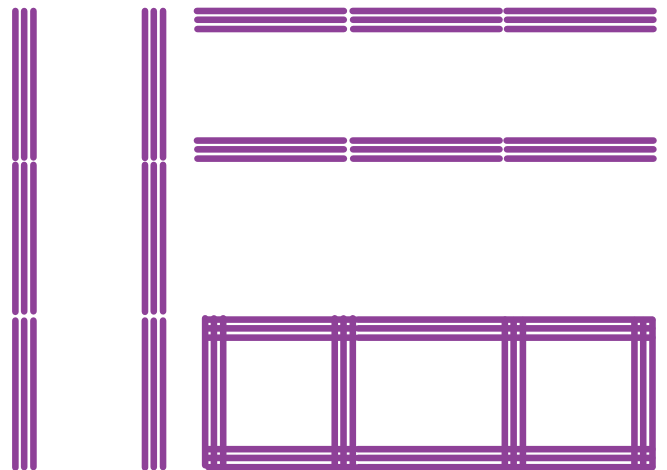
At first, the decorated clothing was only worn by the King, and only on special occasions. But people thought the symbols were very beautiful; they wanted to wear decorated cloth that told stories too. The King asked his artists to teach other people to make the designs. The artists started each design by drawing or painting a series of straight lines to make rows, columns, or squares on the cloth. Then they carved symbols into calabash gourds, pressed

the gourds into black or brown dye made from plants, and stamped the designs onto the cloth. Adinkra became an important part of West African culture.

Today, Ghana is still the main place where Adinkra is made, but Adinkra is popular in many places all over the world. Adinkra designs are used to decorate cloth, furniture, pottery and even jewelry. People can choose designs that represent important personal qualities.

Tell Your Own Story with Adinkra

You can use your Adinkra stamps to tell a story, show your special qualities, and share your hopes. Use the large border stamp to stamp a series of straight lines on a large piece of paper. Stamp several times to create rows or columns. Turn the stamp around to make boxes.



World of Art – Ghana – Adinkra (continued)

Next, select some symbols that tell a little bit about you or represent traits you would like to have. Are you brave? Do you think you are creative? Would you like to be a good leader? Choose symbols that are important to you. Stamp the symbols between the rows and columns, or in the boxes.



You can also stamp Adinkra designs on cloth such as a t-shirt or pillow case. Put some cardboard or newspaper inside the shirt or pillow case first. This will help the symbol stamp more clearly and also protect the back of the fabric. You can use stamping ink or brush a little fabric paint on the stamper. Stamp straight lines first, then add your symbols. What does your art tell about you?