

# A Cut Above: The Crayola™ Cutter as Conservation Tool





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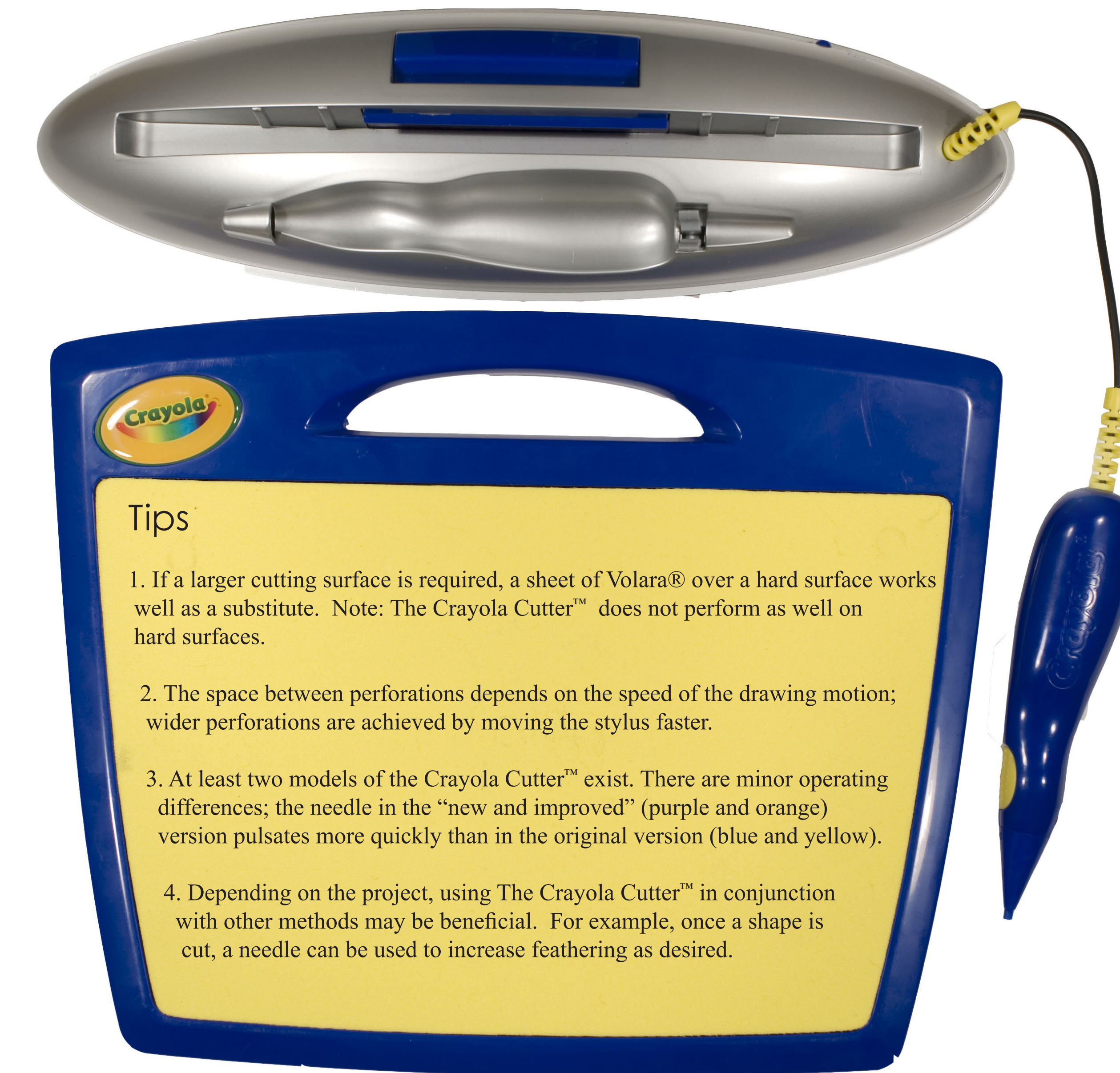
## Introduction

The Crayola™ Cutter, although marketed as a children's toy, has great potential as a conservation tool. It consists of a stylus with a pulsating needle at the tip and a hard foam mat for cutting. Using the Crayola™ Cutter to draw a perforated line makes it easy to cut out complex shapes from a sheet of paper. It can achieve results ranging from a soft, feathered edge for a hinge to a precisely crafted fill or inlay, depending on the type of paper and the speed of the drawing motion.

The Crayola™ Cutter was compared to more traditional tools for creating fills, inlays, and hinges (e.g. scalpel, needle, water and brush). A variety of shapes and sizes were cut from various thicknesses of both western and Japanese papers. Factors considered in the comparison included the ability of the tool to achieve a desired result and the difficulty and time necessary to do so.

This poster summarizes the findings of these tests and presents case studies demonstrating the Crayola™ Cutter as an effective new tool for paper conservators.

Technique	Advantages	Disadvantages	Notes
 Crayola™ Cutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cut complex shapes accurately</li> <li>Fast</li> <li>Good for most paper types</li> <li>Creates good feathered edges on thin papers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot use on light table</li> <li>Minor feathering on many papers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetting perforation allows for more feathering</li> </ul>
 Needle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cut complex shapes by perforating</li> <li>Fast when scoring thin papers</li> <li>Can create feathered edges when scoring thin papers</li> <li>Can use on light table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very slow when perforating</li> <li>Does not create an even feathered edge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be difficult to create fine edges when perforating</li> <li>Wetting perforation allows for better feathering</li> </ul>
 Brush and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can create feathered edges on all paper types</li> <li>Fast when making straight lines</li> <li>Can use on a light table</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult and slow to cut complex shapes accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best on thin papers</li> </ul>
 Scalpel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can cut complex shapes accurately</li> <li>Fast when cutting straight lines</li> <li>Can use on light table</li> <li>Can be used on all paper types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow if attempting complex shapes</li> <li>No feathering</li> </ul>	



## Case Study 1: Inlay



1. Tracing the outline of the drawing onto the inlay paper (a Japanese paper of similar weight) with graphite pencil.



2. Following 1/16" within the traced line with the Crayola™ Cutter to create a slightly smaller perforated outline of the drawing.



3. Pulling the perforated line apart to release the inlay. Moving the stylus at a fast, consistent speed creates wider perforations and more feathering.



4. Using the cut-out center of the inlay as a mask to paste up the edge of the drawing with wheat starch paste before attaching it to the inlay.



5. The drawing adhered to the inlay.



6. A detail of the verso showing the feathered edge of the inlay.

## Case Study 2: Fills



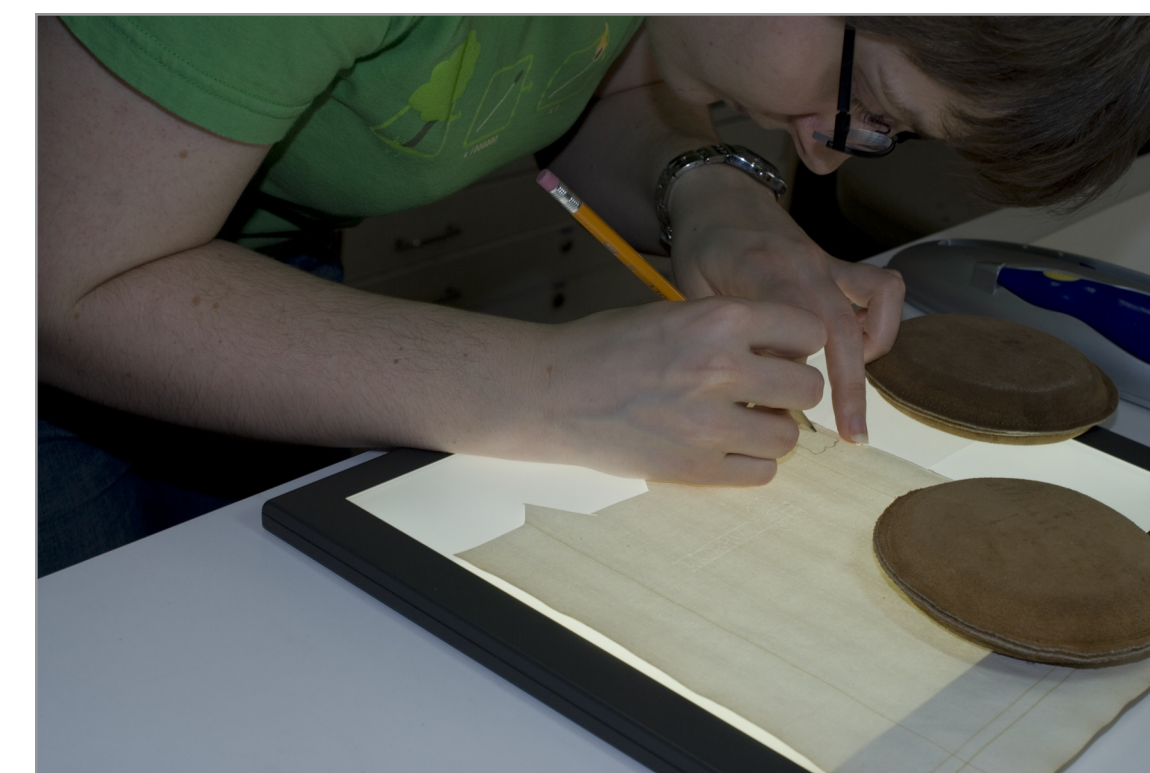
1. An intaglio print (17.8 x 26.6 cm.) with an irregularly shaped loss in the upper left quadrant.



2. A detail of the loss, recto.



3. A detail of the loss, verso. A tracing of the loss was made on Mylar.



4. Tracing the mylar template onto a thin, western, laid paper with a graphite pencil on the light table.



5. Following the pencil line with the Crayola™ Cutter to create a perforated outline.



6. The fill after it has been pulled away from the rest of its sheet.



7. The fill adhered to the print with wheat starch paste.



8. A detail of the fill, recto.

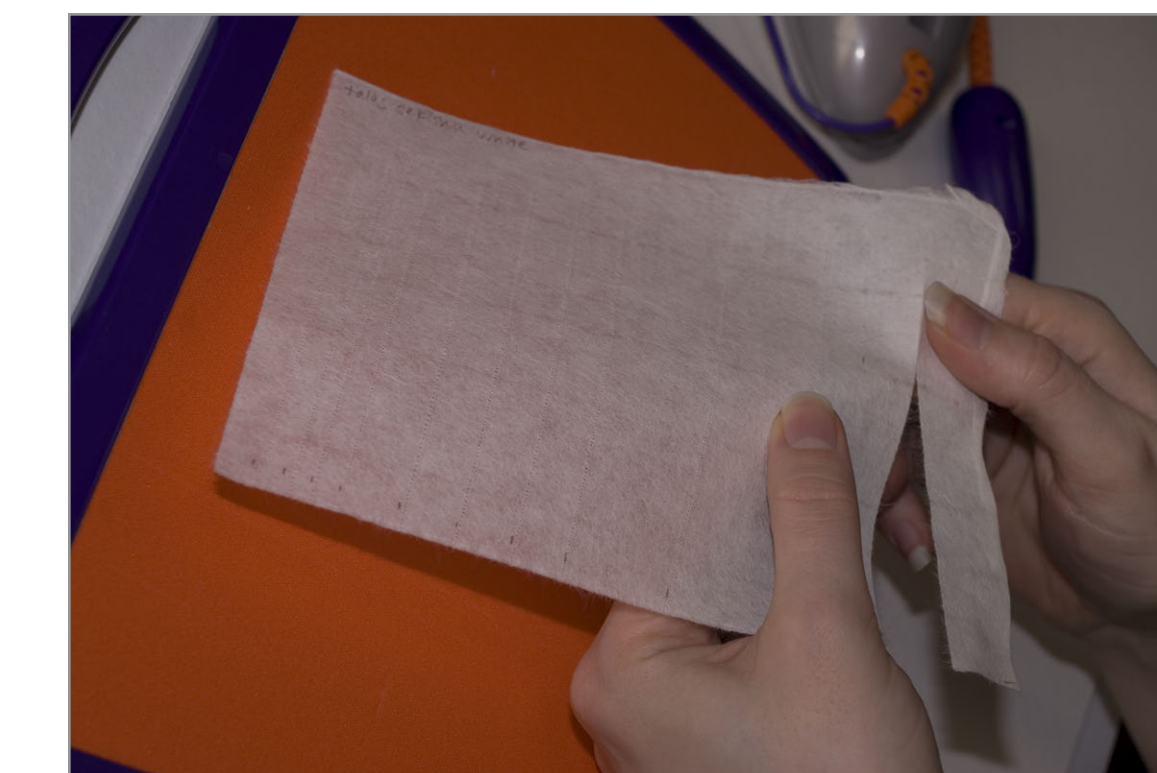


9. A detail of the fill, verso. The edges of the fill were pared down and feathered further using water and a needle.

## Case Study 3: Hinges



1. Using the Crayola™ Cutter to create a series of perforated lines on a medium weight Japanese paper to be used as detachable hinges.



2. Pulling one of the perforated lines apart.



3. A lightweight Japanese tissue with perforated lines created using the Crayola™ Cutter. The lines were pulled apart and are ready to be used as detachable hinges.



4. A medium weight Japanese tissue hinge adhered to the verso of the print with wheat starch paste. The hinge was created quickly using the Crayola™ Cutter.

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