



INSTITUTE OF ART AND DESIGN  
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# Dry point

AN INTAGLIO ETCHING PROCESS

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# Dry point

- ▶ Dry point is a lovely way of making an Intaglio plate without using acids or acid resists, Acrylics or varnish's.
- ▶ You can use many tools including scrapers and burnishes and sandpapers to create your image.
- ▶ These lines and marks and textures that you have created are filled with ink, the way the marks have been made will dictate how much ink is held in the lines.
- ▶ Then the ink viscosity, the pressure you set on your press and then the paper that you use all dictate how the plate prints.
- ▶ You can play with this process as well by mixing up the way you print it. If you do a double drop print (printing onto the same piece of paper twice) using different colors and different printing techniques you can get some fantastic results.



# Dry point Material

- ▶ Metal plate, plastic plate or mount board of your choice including, Aluminum, Zinc or Copper and for plastic use Styrene.
- ▶ Dry point or etching needles
- ▶ Mount board corners
- ▶ Newspaper
- ▶ Oil or water based inks
- ▶ Printing papers such as Somerset or Bread and Butter
- ▶ Tissue paper
- ▶ Scrim for printing if you like to use it
- ▶ Sandpaper
- ▶ Inking Rollers either spindle or hand rollers
- ▶ Etching Printing Press

# Dry point Process

- ▶ Find your drawing, design or photograph that you would like to make a plate of.
- ▶ Use Photoshop and rotate it horizontally so it's backwards (as it will print backwards) either use carbon paper or scribble on the back of the paper so that you can draw and transfer the lead across onto the metal or mountboard plate. If you are using plastic, it is see through so you will be able to trace your original drawing, photograph or design.
- ▶ If you are tracing your image from your own drawing it is simple to retrace onto the plate by turning the tracing paper upside down so you're ready to inscribe it into the plate. If you are tracing a photograph the same applies unless you are using the see through plastic.
- ▶ File your edges of your plate by filing them so they are not sharp and make sure the metal or plastic you are using is clean with no blemishes where you don't want them as these will hold ink and print.

# Dry point Process

- ▶ Tip – Try and draw around the line and the details and put as much detail in as possible. Use crosshatching – do not block out a solid area unless your using cross hatching or sandpaper.
- ▶ Make sure you are incising a good strong line otherwise it will not hold much ink and even if you put a lot of pressure on the press you will not get a good print because there will not be enough ink to print.
- ▶ Printing the plate. Mix your oil based or water based etching ink in with some copper plate oil or veg oil. This makes the ink easier to pull into the lines and the tones of the plate.
- ▶ With newspaper wipe the excess ink from the plate using the palm of your hand – do not scrunch up the newspaper, if you do you will pull the ink from the lines and tones and get a rubbish print.
- ▶ If you would like cleaner lines use scrim to wipe your plates. The burr on a dry point plate gathers excess ink and makes it difficult to get very clean lines when printing so by using scrim you will get cleaner lines.
- ▶ Wipe the edges and make sure your happy before you print. You can over wipe the white areas of the plate and the back of the platemaking sure it is clean.

# Dry point Process

- ▶ Soak your paper for at least 15 minutes. Recommended paper to use is any of the following, Somerset, Fabiano, Bockingford Rough however 'Bread and Butter' editioning paper from John Purcell's is very good – it is not expensive and conservation standard and consistent from year to year so you can rely on the quality of it.
- ▶ When printing using water based ink. Just remember you will need to make sure your paper is completely blotted after soaking it or making sure you scrape it down well before printing otherwise you will get the ink running and it will look messy.
- ▶ This is not by any means asking you to dry the paper out as will not work well. Just getting rid of any excess water will do the trick.
- ▶ Set the pressure on your press to a medium/heavy pressure. You want to push the paper into the lines so that it can pull the ink from the plate.
- ▶ Use your desired number of blankets – note – if your using plates that are 3mm thick you will make your life easier by using three printing blankets, if your using plates that are 1mm thick you will be fine using one blanket – Now do a test print.
- ▶ Once you have done this you will see if you have enough pressure or not enough. If you need to increase the pressure it is right to tighten and left to loosen.

# Dry point Process

- ▶ If you want to print with lots of different colors, ink the plate up with scrim or your fingers or mountboard.
- ▶ Working with one color at a time, putting it on where you want that color, pushing it into the lines and tones and then wiping with newspaper. Then adding the next color.
- ▶ This is a lovely process and the results are fantastic.
- ▶ Quick note about dry-point – you will need to remember that when you're making a dry-point plate your scratching into the plate (metal plastic or mountboard) and making marks.
- ▶ You're not removing the material that was there before you made your mark, you are in fact moving it to the side to create a line that will hold ink, however this will also create a raised burr, this raised burr likes to hold ink so if you would like a clean line when you print you would need to either wipe all these lines hard with newspaper or use a tough scrim to wipe the plate.
- ▶ It's good practice to try inking the plate in both ways using both strong and soft pressure on the press as well so you can see the different results you will get when printing and inking in different ways

**Thank You**