

Collagraph Printing / The Basics

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Basics:	With the collagraph process you can simultaneously print elements of the plate that are on the surface (relief style), as well as below the surface (recessed-intaglio style).
	Caution: You do not want to build up the surface of the plate too high.
	Items that are too high that are hard, can punch holes in the felts or damage the press.
	Changes in height between areas can result in areas not printing, leaving white halos around certain objects.
	The edges of cut forms should be beveled or rounded before being glued to the base plate to prevent white, unprinted areas around the forms.
	Items that are too thick, (overly thick modeling paste, thick plant forms and the like), when run through the press will be crushed, and ooze onto other areas of the print.
Base plate	Cardboard, matt board, chipboard, bookboard, sintra plastic, plexiglass, masonite, plywood or metal. It is recommended you bevel the edges of the plate to a 45-degree angle.
Image	You can begin by drawing your image directly onto the plate. After you've done the drawing, seal the plate with a layer of gloss medium. Also cover the edges and the back of the plate as well.
Adhesives:	Acrylic polymers emulsions (gloss, matt), gesso, modeling paste, Elmer's glue, Sobo glue, epoxy, shellac.
Lines	On sintra or plexi use etching needle and drypoint lines.
	On cardboard, use exacto blade to cut lines. (use spray lacquer to seal)
	Incise lines into wet gesso or modeling paste.
Creating Tone (Similar to an aquatint)	Carborundum grit on gel medium. (coffee grounds, ground up nut shells, sand, etc)-add gel medium to lighten tone. Carborundum sprinkled onto still-wet surface areas of acrylic medium will provide a continuous tone similar to an aquatint. The quality of texture can vary according to the size carborundum particles used. The shape area can be varied by manipulating it with a comb, piece of cardboard or other tool to alter its appearance.
	SILK/Cheesecloth AQUATINT This process produces a very painterly print. The materials are inexpensive and safe yet the finished plates yield the rich blacks of a mezzotint, the fluid marks of a painting, and the full value range of a charcoal drawing. The plates are extremely durable, allowing large editions of consistent prints. The plates are prepared by attaching screen-printing mesh (or organza) to a thin backing board with black acrylic paint. If the plate were printed at this stage it would result in a dense black image. The artist paints with white acrylic onto the dark plate, so it's easy to tell what the value range of the print will be before the plate is inked. The artist builds up layers of acrylic paint to achieve a full range of tones.
	Cut Cardboard (build up layers)
	De-laminate cardboard to reveal rough surface.
	Sandpaper
Whites:	Cellophane tape, masking tape, packing tape, duct tape, gesso, gel medium, screen filler (red oxide colored material).
Photo collagraph	Screen a half-tone patterned image onto base and sprinkle with carborundum grit while still wet.
Text/Numbers	Use stencils and paint gesso or similar materials through.
Creating Textures	
Adhesives (textures)	Certain adhesives that dry to a hard consistency can be used to create textures or linear images. These include Plastic, Wood, Miracle Adhesive, Liquid Steel, Liquid Aluminum, Duco

	Cement, wood putty, polymer acrylic gesso, jade glue. PVC adhesive, modeling paste, and other such products. Some of the glues can be reinforced texturally with sand or Carborundum, which is sprinkled into the wet images and left to harden. Various materials can be painted, scraped, or otherwise applied to a hardboard, matboard, or plywood base plate. The plates may be suitable for inking and printing either in the relief technique or by intaglio methods.
Brush like textures	Gel medium (tint with color to see easier), modeling paste.
Plant Material	Use fresh material. (dried leaves are too fragile), don't use overly thick stems, plants that hold a lot of moisture.
Found objects	Gaskets, coins, perforated patterns etc. (cut into the plate to recess them, so they don't cut into the felts).
Fabrics	Corduroy, burlap, organza, linen, etc.
Papers	Tissue, crinkled papers, tin foil, plastic wrap.
Pressed	Press textures into wet layers of modeling paste or gesso. (plastic wrap, plant forms etc.) Mylar into epoxy (ala John Armstrong)
Finish Sealing the plate & materials:	Thin layers of varnish (water-based)
	Thin layers of gloss medium
	Spray varnish or lacquer (for finer areas) such as Krylon spray varnish.
	Cover your completed plate with two thin coats of gloss acrylic medium. Dry completely overnight or preferably for 24 hours.
Warping	If your plate begins to warp because of waterbased materials attached onto the front of the matrix, you can try gluing a large piece of paper to the back of it to equalize the tension. This will help flatten the matrix.
Ink Modification	Add flash-oil, burnt plate oil, easy wipe compound (Tack Reducer) or miracle gel reducer.
Applying Ink to the plate.	If you have delicate areas, you can use a soft rubber brayer to apply the ink instead of carding it on.
Wiping the plate	You can wipe the plate as you would a regular intaglio plate. 1-Card on the ink; 2-Wipe with Tarlatan; 3-Wipe with Cheesecloth or phone book page. You can also relief roll parts of the plate as well.
Working with color	One color
	Ala Poupee: Wiping the plate selectively with several colors at once.
	Jig-saw plate: Cut the plate into several pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. Ink up the individual pieces separately with different colors, then reassembled for printing.
	Monotype, ink, brush on color and relief roll with random colors or selectively.
	Multiple Runs: Stencils: Positive or negative
Printing	Usually the plate is printed intaglio. Print with the thick foam pad on top of the protective sheet, followed by the thick felt blanket.
Paper	Traditionally, heavy strong papers such as Stonehenge, Rives BFK, Arnhem or Arches Cover. You can also print with Eastern styled papers like Thai Kozo.
Preparing the paper for printing	When printing a collagraph, you will need to pre-soak the paper. This makes the paper more flexible to allow it to be pushed into the recesses and to move around your more textured areas. NEVER PUT NEWSPRINT IN THE SOAKING TRAYS!!!! If using a thick western styled paper (Cotton) you can set it in the soaking tray for at least a minute or up to an hour, depending on the quality of the paper. Remove the paper, and hold by one corner to allow excess water to run off, then blot with towel to remove any remaining standing water. If using a Eastern styled paper like Thai Kozo. (DO NOT SOAK IT!!)

Instead, quickly dip it and remove it immediately or it will fall apart.
You can also lay it flat on a towel and mist it with a spray water bottle.