

Printing by PinPress

Weighing in between an etching press and the back of a spoon, the PinPress offers an alternative printing method that is truly artist involved, yet not tedious. The success of the PinPress lies in its

manufacture: a precision machined roller with durable all metal construction. This hands-on printmaking tool emphasizes the painterly quality inherent in monotypes.

Printing monotypes:

1. Develop your image on a thin, smooth surfaced plate. Avoid heavy applications of ink that will create blobs when pressure is applied.
2. Place the inked plate on a super flat surface—we recommend ¼” or thicker tempered plate glass. Tempered plate glass is more durable and less dangerous if it is accidentally broken. Sprinkle a few drops of water between the plate and glass, then jiggle the plate until it sticks to the glass. This will help keep the plate from moving during printing.
3. Lay your printmaking paper on top of the inked plate. Using a press blanket is not necessary, but it will help bring out plate marks and lessen halos around stencils or chine collé.
4. Next apply pressure by rolling across the paper slowly and evenly (mimic a press) several times with the PinPress. Avoid cutting across the plate with the edge of the roller or using quick jerky movements.

Ink

We recommend water-based Akua Liquid Pigment and soy-oil based Akua Intaglio inks. These highly pigmented inks can be printed to either moist or dry paper with light hand pressure. Other water-based inks and paints also print will with a PinPress; however, using moist paper is a requirement. For oil-based inks, reduce the tack with burnt plate oil or other tack reducing compounds such as Easy-Wipe or Miracle Gel, and print to moist paper for best results.

Roll-Ups with Akua Inks

The new formula Akua Intaglio Inks print wonderfully to dry paper with PinPress pressure. Simply roll onto the plate, create the image and print.

For plate roll-ups with Akua Liquid Pigment inks, mix 20% Tack Thickener into the ink first. Add more Tack Thickener if the brayer skids and the ink does not roll out easily on the plate.

You can also build up thin layers of Akua Liquid Pigment directly on the plate without using Tack Thickener. Put 3 to 8 drops of Akua Liquid Pigment plus two to four drops of Retarder on the plate and roll it out with a brayer. The Retarder will help dry paper release easily from the plate after printing. Continue adding ink only, a few drops at a time, and rolling it out until the desired color intensity is achieved. Create the image and print.

Directly Painted Monotypes with Akua Inks

Roll a base coat of Akua Intaglio Transparent Base on the plate and then simply paint with Akua Liquid Pigment inks. Print on moist or dry paper. Akua Release Agent can also be used as the base coat.

Use Akua Intaglio inks to paint directly on the plate by mixing the ink with Blending Medium until it is pliable enough to apply with a bush.

These highly pigmented inks build intensity with each successive layer, so do experiment with multiple plate drops. As a general rule, print yellows first, then reds, then blues, and finally blacks.

Printing plates

Just about any smooth, non-porous surface will work from butcher paper to plastic. One sixteenth inch polycarbonate plastic is ideal. Use the edge of a pair of scissors or knife to scrape off any burr the plate has at the edges from being cut. Beveling isn't necessary.

Thin sheets of frosted Mylar also make great plates. These can easily be cut by hand for stencils and non-traditionally shaped plates. Avoid acetate as it absorbs moisture and curls.

Press beds

You need a truly flat surface for successful printing. If you have a heavy glass table top, you're set. Otherwise, you can order tempered plate glass from most glass retail stores. Use at least ¼" thick tempered glass on a strong support such as a ¾" plywood.

Most surfaces, including laminated woods and Plexiglas, are not as flat as they appear. To check a surface, roll the PinPress across it. If you can see gaps under the roller while viewing it at eye level, the surface isn't flat enough. Those gaps are areas that won't receive pressure during printing.

For the best leverage, position the surface being used as the press bed slightly lower than hip level. Having the press bed too high makes printing feel awkward and greatly reduces the pressure that can be comfortably applied.

Paper

When printing to dry paper use paper with a smooth surface such as Arches 88 or hot pressed watercolor paper. Slightly textured sized papers such as Hahnemuhle Silkscreen or Magnani Pescia need to be dampened or soaked to soften the surface in order to press the paper completely against the plate. Other western papers that work well when moistened include Fabriano Rosaspina, Fabriano

Pescia, Pabriano Uno, Rives BFK and Somerset. (McClain's has not tested these papers with Akua Intaglio ink so test first to make sure they will dry completely. Akua Intaglio dries by absorption instead of oxidation, so the paper must be thick and absorbent.)

Registration

For quick and easy registration, center your plate over a piece of paper that is the same size as the printmaking paper you are using. As you lay down your printmaking paper, line it up with the paper under your plate. With glass press beds, the guide paper can be placed under the glass.

NOTE FROM McCLAIN'S

We have tried printing linoleum and Shina plywood blocks with the PinPress, and found that it does not work well. Even though the blocks print very well on letterpress presses or etching presses, apparently they are not uniform enough to take the ink evenly with the pressure we were able to exert just with our arms. A light felt helped, but then all of the marks on the block were embossed into the paper as well.

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