

Resingrave

NOTE: Carve Resingrave with standard wood engraving tools or rotary bits (such as Dremel® tools). NEVER try to carve it with linocut or woodcut tools. Resingrave is so hard it will ruin the tool.

Here are some tips to help make your engraving experience a success. Many of these ideas are taken from *Relief and Intaglio Printmaking Methods on Resingrave Blocks*, written by Richard Woodman, the inventor of Resingrave. It is an excellent reference and we recommend it highly.

Preparing the Plate for Relief Printmaking

Check the plate carefully for scratches and other blemishes and sanded lightly if necessary. To do this, draw light pencil lines across the block's surface. Place the block face down on a piece of 180 grit wet sandpaper which rests on a sheet of glass. Move the block in small circles with light pressure until all pencil marks have disappeared. Wipe the block with a degreasing solvent such as acetone.

Before putting the design on the block, many people find it useful to tone the block, using a wash of sumi or India ink mixed with water, or a pale colored felt tip pen. Then when the cuts are made, the white Resingrave will show up and make it clear what has been cut and what has not.

Preparing the Plate for Intaglio Printmaking

For intaglio printmaking, the surface needs to be sanded to make it very slick so it can be easily wiped. To do this, follow the instructions for sanding above, beginning with wet 600 grit sandpaper, repeated with wet 1500 grit and finishing with a polishing compound like Putz Pomade. After polishing, bevel the edges of the block slightly with dry 150 grit sandpaper so they do not cut the damp printing paper.

Resingrave & Heavy Tool Pressure

When subjected to very heavy tool pressure, smaller gravers may produce scalloped edges and larger ones may cause edges to chip. Scalloped edges can be shaved back at the risk of making the cut slightly wider, but the problem can be avoided altogether by using lighter tool pressure and very sharp engraving tools.

Chipping may occur when a bold line of varied width starts to narrow. A sure way to achieve a bold, varied width line without chipping is to outline the shape with a small elliptic tool, then clear out the defined shape.

Using an Etching Press to Print Resingrave

When using an etching press to print Resingrave plates, one or two layers of thick paper placed on top of the print paper are all that is needed as padding. Use only enough pressure to obtain a clean, strong relief impression. The use of felts or blankets along with the heavier pressure more appropriate to intaglio printmaking are both unnecessary plus there is a risk of fracturing the resin plate that is glued to its base.

Repairing Accidents

Clean the surface of the plate with acetone. Shallow cuts (less than .5 mm) should be deepened slightly. Mix a small amount of the materials for a stiff, opaque epoxy resin (Devcon's Two Ton White is ideal) according to instructions. Put a small amount on the end of a toothpick and poke into the cavity to be filled. Overfill the cavity slightly. After 12 hours or so, when the resin has set, shave it back almost level with the block surface using a single-sided razor blade in a holder (the kind used for scraping ink off a slab, available at McClain's). The blade should approach the plug with a slicing action with a low angle. Trying to slice too much at once might pull the plug out. Sanding back is much safer, but again, too much sanding can scratch or lower the surrounding surface. Wait 24 hours before working in the repaired area and avoid heavy tool pressure.

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