

Resingrave

Resingrave may be new to you, so here are some tips to help make your engraving experience a success. Many of these ideas are taken from *How to do Wood Engraving and Intaglio Printmaking on Resingrave Blocks*, a book written by Richard Woodman, the inventor of Resingrave. It is an excellent reference and we recommend it highly.

Preparing the Block

Whether wood or polymer, the surface of any engraving block should be examined for scratches and other blemishes and sanded to give it some bite. If the surface is too slick, it may not accept pencil or watercolor when the design is applied. Draw pencil lines across the block's surface. Place the block face down on a piece of sandpaper (grit #180) 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 like rubber cement thinner or nail polish remover. 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 light colored Resingrave will show and make it clear what has been cut and what has not.

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. The prising action required to lower the handle can cause stress plane fractures to run ahead of the graver tip that break off at the surface as a ragged edge. Blunt gravers or those in which the burr has not been properly removed, and sudden changes in line width, increase the risk. A sure way to achieve a bold, varied width line is to outline the shape with a small elliptic tool, then clear out the defined shape.

Repairing Accidents

Clean the surface of the block 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. If the cavity is located on the edge of a block, masking tape can be attached to the side to act as a dam. 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 paint, such as Red Devil). 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 will scratch or lower the surrounding surface. Wait 24 hours before working in the repaired area and avoid heavy tool pressure.

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