

Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

Foil Printing Class

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Hot-stamped foil adheres to any smooth substrate coated with copier toner, polymer emulsion (Guerra Acrylic 65), or gel media, at temperatures of 200° F or less.

Foils can be altered in many ways by stenciling, cutting, wooling out, folding, alcohol manipulation, graphite transfers, acid etching, embossing, and resists.

Foil printing using a laser printer.

Prepare the image in Photoshop.

1. Open image in Photoshop.
2. Be sure you have a good image resolution, between 300 and 200 dpi
3. In the layers palette, make several layers of your background, (by duplicating the background several times).
4. Activate the top layer and
5. Go to Image> Adjustments>Threshold
6. The image will become B&W
6. Adjust the cursor to the right to add more detail to the image, or to the left to decrease detail.
7. Click OK
8. On the layers palette, click on the eye symbol next to the top layer to make the layer invisible
9. Make the next layer active by clicking on it, and repeat process 5 and 6.
10. Leave the background untouched
11. Go to layer>new layer to create a new blank layer
12. Fill the blank layer with black by going to Edit>Fill>Black
- 12A. Start printing all the layers created one by one, starting from the top (clicking on the eye symbol makes the layer visible/invisible).

How it works: The foil will adhere to the black areas. The left-over scrap/piece can be used to transfer the white/foil image onto the plain black surfaces, you just printed, or on the acrylic coated papers.

Powder and liquid toner can be used as a drawing media on which foil will adhere. Traditional printmaking papers, such as Arches Cover, Rives BFK, Stonehenge, etc. will work well with this process. Use methanol alcohol to make liquid toner in a 50/50 proportion. Use brushed, pencils, fingers, to apply the toner. Place the finished drawing on the hot plate heated at 240° F for about 5 minutes to bond the toner to the paper. If covered with a metallic tray raised about 2" above hot plate the bonding will work faster (see page 93).

Priming paper for foil stamping

A smooth foundation coat provides the ideal ground for adhesion of foil.

1. Cold-press dry paper (see pg. 17)
2. Mix 20% water to 80% Acrylic 65.
3. To further retard coalescence dilute the acrylic with ethylene or propylene glycol instead of water.
4. Wet paper briefly in water. (Do not soak) Blot excess water from surface and tape immediately to a board using brown craft paper.

5. Prime a fine bristle brush or foam brush with a little water and begin applying the acrylic mix, using long strokes from one side to the other. Go over surface of paper once. Let it dry and apply a second coat. Two thin uniform coats work well.

6. When acrylic coated paper is thoroughly dry, it is ready for application of the foil (see pg. 17).

Printing intaglio plates over roll leaf

1. Cold-press dry paper (see pg. 17)
2. Choose foil, and coat adhesive side with 80% Acrylic 65: 20% water, using a soft brush.
3. Cure for about an hour, not on hot plate.
4. Set potentiometers on hot plate and Iowa Foil Printer at 200° F or less. Do not use excessive heat.
5. Trim excess foil
6. Place coated and cured foil on cold-pressed surface of paper.
7. Place paper and foil on hot plate.
8. While paper is warming, quickly caress surface of leaf with heel of hand, causing foil to adhere smoothly. Work sheet of foil from inside out to allow air to escape from central area.
9. Stamp foil with three slow passes of the Foil Printer.
10. Cool, and remove polyester film (see page 63).

To achieve a soft edged effect, irregularly shaped pieces of foil are stamped in layers, and selected areas are uncovered and rubbed with paper towels, cotton swabs, or steel wool soaked in Methanol Alcohol, (see page 47).

A different soft edge effect can be achieved by rubbing out foiled surfaces with fine 0000 steel wool. To control the shapes and limits of the "wool-outs," Mylar stencils can be cut and taped in place to protect or expose certain areas (see page 48).

Gel media or 100% acrylic 65 can be used to make free-form reliefs which may be stamped with foil. Thick layers of gel medium are applied to paper and then manipulated with a brush, stick or fingers. Mylar stencils can be cut and taped in place to protect or expose certain areas (see page 56).