

## Acrylic Drypoint Demonstration

This demonstration will allow printmakers to save money and time.

- The price of acrylic plate is much cheaper than metal plates. Acrylic plates are also easier to find, widely available in many stores.
- Due to the transparency of acrylic, the image is visible directly below the plate, so a separate image transfer becomes unnecessary.
- Unlike metal plates, acrylic requires no polishing at all. This saves time, allowing the plate to be used right away.

Even though it is a drypoint intaglio method, fine lines are easy to establish by using the electric engraving tools. Acrylic is easier to work with than metal plates when it comes to these tools. Additionally, by using the powder or grit on the plate, it is simple to build interesting textures in the print.

### Required Materials

- Acrylic Plates (transparent and at least 0.8 inches thickness recommended)
- Powdery Medium (dry non-liquids) ⇒ grit, sand, etc.
- Glue or Varnish
- Etching Ink
- Watercolor Paint (optional)

### Required Tools

- Engraving Tools  
⇒ Etching needle, box cutter, electric engraving tool (Dremel)
- File

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## PART I

### BEVEL

Use the file to bevel the edges of the acrylic plate. Alternatively, this step could be done after establishing the image on the plate.

### SKETCH

Prepare a sketch that fits the size of the acrylic plate.

Place the image underneath the transparent acrylic plate. The image should show through the plate, but be careful to maintain a steady viewing angle or the pattern will be skewed. I recommend trying to look directly down from above, or from a single angle most comfortable to work at.

## ESTABLISH THE IMAGE

Establish the image on the plate with engraving tools or by using other materials. Trace along your sketched image with the engraving tool, carving into the acrylic plate.

► For large open areas, a mixture of grit and glue (or varnish) may be applied with a brush to develop a grittier texture. Depending on the desired darkness (texture), the amount of grit may be adjusted. Do not use any powders that would dissolve in water, like sugar or salt. Stone grit, sand, and similar substances tend to work best. It is recommended to let the mixture dry more than half a day. Depending on the glue used, it may take up to a day to dry completely.

► For fine lines or delicate images, engraving tools capable of low vibration at high speeds are recommended.

★ Tip: By changing the tips (bits) on engraving tools, it is possible to establish an image with a wider variety of textures. In this demonstration, we will check the different textures that result from using each type of tip.

If electric engraving tools are unavailable, it is also possible to use this technique with any regular etching needle or cutter. When using a cutter, be careful to scratch curved lines.

## **PART II**

### INKING

For line work, printing with regular etching ink is recommended. Do not mix the easy wipe compound and plate oil too much. If over-mixed, it will cause the tarlatan to remove too much ink and it will become greasier than traditional metal plates.

For an area where the powder grit mixture has been applied, both etching ink and watercolor paints work well.

► Etching ink

This time, the easy wipe compound and plate oil should be used to apply ink and wipe easily.

► Watercolor paint

Use un-dried paint. Apply the paint the same way etching ink would be applied. Alternatively, using a brush may be easier. The paint may be wiped with tarlatan or cotton fabric. Let the paint dry a little bit.

## **PART III**

### PRINTING

Prepare damp paper. If watercolor is being used, the paper should be a bit damper than usual.

The acrylic plates can be used to print exactly like any other intaglio plate!