

Monotype Printmaking

Introduction



Reductive



Additive



Direct offset (negative)



Direct offset (positive)



Feather (ghost print)



Feather (negative)

Monotype is any form of printmaking that results in a unique, one-off print. In a nutshell it is simply the manipulation of inks on a non-porous surface and as such it is the closest that printmaking can get to painting. It offers the printmaker a very direct way to transfer an image from a plate and presents by its very nature a limitless potential to experiment with rich colour and mark making.

Monotypes can be printed with or without a press and good results can be achieved using water-based inks. For these reasons it is the ideal medium through which to introduce printmaking to children. See *Printmaking in Schools*.

For the professional, the best results are achieved with oil-based inks and an etching press as outlined below.

The Monotype Plate

Any non-porous plate that is thin enough to go through an etching press is suitable for monotype. Formica sheets, aluminium, zinc or copper all make ideal plates to work on provided that all sharp edges have been filed smooth.

Thin transparent plastic such as perspex or acrylic sheet is recommended as it offers the added convenience of being able to attach a drawing beneath to act as a guide over which to work.

1. Additive Monotype



Health and Safety:

To avoid skin contact with inks and solvents wear surgical gloves or barrier cream.

What you will need:

- A range of artist's brushes
- A monotype plate, filed if necessary
- White spirit
- Cotton rags
- A range of coloured printing inks
- Paper
- Pallet knife

Instructions:

1. Cut paper to size and put into water tray to soak.
2. Place a little of each colour on to glass for a pallet.
3. If using a transparent plate tape drawing to back of plate to work from.
4. Paint designs directly on to the plate.
5. Use white spirit to create delicate washes.
6. Use cotton rag to make marks or corrections.

CAUTION

- Do not apply inks too heavily as they will be squeeze in the press, creating a splurge across the plate.
- Allow white spirit washes 5 min. to evaporate off if too liquid on the plate.

2. Reductive Monotype



Health and Safety:

To avoid skin contact with inks and solvents wear surgical gloves or barrier cream.

What you will need:

- A pencil or brush
- A monotype plate, filed if necessary
- Cotton rags
- Cotton buds
- Printing ink
- Paper
- Pallet knife
- A roller

Instructions:

1. Cut paper to size and put into water tray to soak.
2. Roll out a thin and even layer of printing ink to cover the whole plate.
3. Use the back of a pencil or brush to draw in to the inked plate or selectively wipe areas away with a cotton bud.
4. Selected areas can be erased completely to add shape and define outlines.
5. Cleared areas can be added to with a brush (see Additive Monotype).

CAUTION

- Fine lines drawn into too thick an ink will result in the printed lines being squashed together in the press. As a rule a thick covering of ink will result in a loss of detail.



3. Direct Offset Monotype



Health and Safety:

To avoid skin contact with inks and solvents wear surgical gloves or barrier cream.

What you will need:

- A monotype plate
- A range of colour printing inks
- Paper
- Pallet knife
- Roller
- Pencil

Instructions:

1. Cut paper to size and put aside (do not soak).
2. Roll out a thin and even layer of printing ink to cover the whole plate.
3. Place the plate on top of a clean sheet of newspaper.
4. Carefully place the paper directly over the inked plate.
5. From the edges of the paper feel for the corners of the plate beneath the paper and mark them.
6. Using the marked corners as a guide, draw onto the back of the paper with a pencil or press onto the paper with finger tips to create tonal areas. Be careful not to apply incidental pressure with your hands to the paper as this will create a mark.
7. Remove paper to reveal print on the reverse side.
8. Plate can also be printed in the press on dampened paper to produce a negative version.
9. A drawing can be taped to the back of the paper as a guide for making the print.



CAUTION

- If the ink is applied too thickly to the plate then the image will be less detailed and more likely to suffer from interference.
- Experiment with different papers to judge their effectiveness. Generally thin papers will tend to settle on top of the ink and pick up more interference whilst thicker papers may prove too difficult to draw through.

4. Monotype Using Found Objects



Health and Safety:

To avoid skin contact with inks and solvents wear surgical gloves or barrier cream.

What you will need:

- A monotype plate
- Printing inks
- 3 sheets of paper
- Pallet knife
- Roller
- Pencil
- Leaves, feathers or textiles

Instructions:

1. Cut paper to size and put into water tray to soak.
2. Roll out a thin and even layer of printing ink to cover the whole plate.
3. Place inked plate on press bed and arrange objects on top.
4. Lay dampened paper over the plate and run through the press.
5. Remove paper to reveal white silhouette print.
6. Remove objects from plate, lay dampened paper over it and run through the press again to create ghost print.
7. Place objects inky side up on top of a clean plate.
8. Lay dampened paper over the top and run through the press to create a positive print of the objects.



CAUTION

- Leaves, feathers, lace, paper shapes or textiles are all suitable for this process.
- **DO NOT** USE ANYTHING SHARP OR TOO THICK AS THIS WILL DAMAGE THE PRESS.

Further Information

www.vinitavoogd.com

Newell, Jackie and Whittington, Dee, Monoprinting (Printmaking Handbooks) published by A and C Black