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Grad Print Media

Intaglio Plate Making Methods

Etched metal substrate

- copper, zinc, aluminum (each using a specific mordant) made in the traditional forms of etching, aquatint – wiped intaglio or relief (surface roll).

Drypoint

- incised directly into a metal or plastic surface, known for the soft burred line, but interesting when printed beyond that point as well. Examples: clear acrylic sheeting, high density plastics, chipboard treated with sealer (polyurethane, etc), hardboard and various other sealed surfaces – usually wiped intaglio but relief may be possible.

Collograph

- consisting of gesso coated chipboard, carved after an additional layer of modeling paste (or similar surface), then sealed. Similar methods include adding texture to the chipboard (or hardboard etc) plates using thin found objects, fabric, paper, textures like sand and a variety of sandpapers. These plates can be wiped intaglio or printed relief.

Relief plate

- usually consist of linoleum in blocks or in a roll, woodblock, or a variety of cut and/or shaped chipboard treated so as to be water and solvent proof (acrylic or polyurethane). These matrices are printed with surface rolls at any stage of making a print to augment an intaglio plate. A relief plate can be printed dark ink on light surface or visa versa thereby creating the general illusion of a negative.

Plaster print

- any low relief intaglio plate can be printed in plaster. The subsequent plaster print can then be worked as a carved image or left as a stand alone print. The matrix is laid face up on a clean smooth surface (such as plate glass) that has been coated with a mold release product, like vaseline. A dam is built a few inches from the plate with any flexible leak proof material such as plasticine. Plaster is mixed, and poured on the inked plate. When the plaster is completely dry (usually overnight) it can be lifted from the surface to reveal a detailed and accurate printed image. Large plaster prints require a form of reinforcement in the plaster. Most printing methods of inking a plate (intaglio, relief/surface roll, stencils, ala poupee, chine colle and the like) will serve well.

“Silk Aquatint”

- is essentially a collograph method on a very fine scale. Thin, finely woven fabric such as silkscreen mesh is glued to a thin backing such as poly-styrene, or thin hardboard, chipboard. The fabric is painted with acrylic paint in a thin and thick fashion, in varying amounts. This causes the fabric to accept more or less ink when wiped intaglio, thus creating the illusion of an aquatint/halftone/pixilated area. Usually coarse (10xx – 12xx) silkscreen mesh is adhered to the substrate with black acrylic paint brushed on the mesh. When the mesh is completely dry, if printed it would print as a solid black. To lighten and modulate tones, one can use gel medium and white acrylic paint (to make changes more easily visible), thinned with water, filling in the texture of the mesh thereby printing with less intaglio ink in those areas.

Carborundum “etching”

-is also essentially a collograph technique. The substrate requirements are the same as in "silk aquatint" – a stiff, thin water and solvent-proof backing. To this varying layers of carborundum (in loose form used to grind lithographic stones) mixed with acrylic medium are added to the plate to build texture. Carborundum grits range from very fine (320) to very coarse (50). Once a surface has been build up is dry it is possible to lessen the texture with paint with layers of acrylic medium, adding less (or no) carborundum to the mixture.

There is another form of carborundum etching whereby one sands the plate and then burnishes back whites into the image.

QTX Photo-etching

Is a form of photo-etching that can be accomplished with the textile screen emulsion Nazdar QTX. This emulsion is quite thick and dries to a hard, printable surface. Three or more layers must be applied (in a safe lit dark room), drying each layer before adding the next. When the QTX is very dry, a "positive" in the form of a Kodalith contact transparency, a dark inkjet or laser acetate, or hand drawn acetate can be contact printed in a litho exposure unit. Tests must be done to determine the proper exposure time for each unit. Once the plate has been exposed properly (too little time will not sufficiently harden the emulsion, too much time will harden the entire surface) then the plate is washed under water. The areas of the plate that were not exposed to light (the dark areas of the positive) will wash out and the areas that were open and clear on the positive will become a hard enough surface for intaglio printing. The plate is wiped and printed in the same fashion as an intaglio plate, taking care to bevel the edges and raise the press bed to account for the additional height of the substrate.

Screenprint Sugar Lift

There are a number of ways to make a sugarlift etching. The most common is to use a mixture of Karo syrup, soap and ink. This mixture is painted on to a absolutely degreased plate. When dry, the plate is covered carefully with a coating of hardground. When the hardground is dry the plate is put into a warm bath of water. The sugar mixture gradually lifts off of the plate leaving those areas of the plate open. Another mixtures for sugar lift is sweetened condensed milk.