Printmaking 1

Introduction to printmaking
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Before you start

Welcome to Printmaking 1

Printmaking is one of the most versatile art forms. It is an exciting way to explore making images and learn about how process is integral to making and developing visual ideas. Printmaking combines both methodical precision with expansive spontaneity and creativity. Printmaking involves learning and growing your skills in a range of techniques alongside embracing its expressive creative potential.

Course aims

The unit aims to:
• use drawing to investigate and generate ideas
• explore a range of printmaking techniques and media
• develop your knowledge of the history of printmaking and the work of historical and contemporary printmakers
• use reflection to develop your learning

Learning outcomes
• demonstrate the use of drawing to develop your visual ideas
• use a range of printmaking techniques and media
• understand the historical and contemporary contexts that inform your work
• reflect upon your own learning experience

Your tutor

Your tutor is your main point of contact with OCA. Before you start work, make sure that you are clear about your tuition arrangements. The OCA tuition system is explained in some detail in your Student Handbook.

If you haven't already done so, please write a paragraph or two about your experience to date. Add background information about anything that you think may be relevant for your tutor to know about you (your profile) – for example your experience of making art so far, your reasons for starting this course and what you hope or expect to achieve from it. Email your profile to your tutor as soon as possible. This will help him or her understand how best to support you during the course.

Please note that tutors can only deal with occasional emails between assignments.

Do note that you’re encouraged to reflect carefully on all tutor feedback and, if appropriate, to go back to the assignment you submitted and make adjustments to it based on your tutor’s comments. If you decide to submit your work for formal assessment, making such adjustments demonstrates responsiveness and learning and will help improve your mark.
Course support

Your tutor is supported by the Course Support Advisors, who can answer questions relating to course documentation or OCA processes in between assignments / feedback points. You can email Course Support here: coursesupport@oca.ac.uk.

Studying with OCA

If you haven’t already done so, now is a good time to work through the free introductory course ‘An Introduction to Studying in HE’. This is available on the OCA student website.

Don’t be tempted to skip this introductory course as it contains valuable advice on study skills (e.g. reading, note-taking), research methods and academic conventions which will stand you in good stead throughout your studies.

The OCA website will be a key resource for you during your studies with OCA, so take some time to familiarise yourself with it. Log onto the OCA student website and take the tour of the website.

Remember too, that there are other students following this course, so you are not on your own. Use the online forums to reflect on your findings and discuss issues with other students.

Formal assessment

Read the section on assessment in your Student Handbook at an early stage in the course. See also the study guide on assessment and getting qualified for detailed information about assessment and accreditation. You’ll find this on the OCA student website.

For assessment you’ll need to submit a cross-section of the work you’ve done on the course as follows:

• a portfolio of the work you’ve done on the course, including supporting studies and
• Sketch and development work (the portfolio and sketch work accounts for 80% of your final grade)
• The short essay which is included in Assignment Five (20% of your final grade)
• your learning log or blog url.

Your portfolio should include a selection of the work you’ve produced for the five course assignments. You’ll be expected to include twelve final pieces drawn from the course as a whole, and showing discernment is important. If you have chosen to include work that you re-visited after tutor feedback, label your work clearly to indicate if it is a re-worked piece and be sure to include some of your original assignment submission as well any amended versions. The first assignment is a diagnostic assignment and will not count towards your final grade. However the assessors will want to see the work you produce for this assignment to help them gauge your progress. Only work done during the course should be submitted to your tutor or for formal assessment.
Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria are central to the assessment process for this course, so if you’re going to have your work assessed to gain formal credits, please make sure you take note of these criteria and consider how each of the assignments you complete demonstrates evidence of each criterion. On completion of each assignment, and before you send your assignment to your tutor, test yourself against the criteria – in other words, do a self-assessment, and see how you think you would do. Note down your findings for each assignment you've completed in your learning log, noting all your perceived strengths and weaknesses, taking into account the criteria every step of the way. This will be helpful for your tutor to see, as well as helping you prepare for assessment. The five assessment criteria are listed below.

- Demonstration of technical and visual skills – Materials, techniques, observational skills, visual awareness, design and compositional skills.
- Quality of outcome – Content, application of knowledge, presentation of work in a coherent manner with discernment.
- Demonstration of creativity – Imagination, experimentation, invention, development of a personal voice.
- Context – Reflection, research (learning logs).

Your learning log

The learning log is an integral element of every OCA course. If this is your first course with OCA, you’ll find guidance on what to include in a learning log and how to set up an online learning log/blog on the OCA student website.

You’re strongly recommended to use an online log or blog instead of (or in addition to) a physical learning log. A blog is a great way to consolidate and present your work, findings, observations and reflections for your tutor and peers to review. You can also include links to new research sources you’ve found so that these are available to your fellow students.

Setting up a blog is easy using the OCA Wordpress template which you’ll find in the ‘Resources’ section of the OCA student site.

Plan ahead

This OCA Level 1 course (HE level 4) represents 400 hours of learning time. Allow around 20% of this time for reflection and keeping your learning log. The course should take about a year to complete if you spend around eight hours each week on it.

As with all OCA courses, these course materials are intended to be used flexibly but keep your tutor fully informed about your progress. You’ll need to allow extra time if you decide to have your work formally assessed.

Printmaking 1 is divided into five parts, corresponding to the five course assignments. The first assignment will enable your tutor to get to know you, review your work so far and decide how best to help you in future.

Each part of the course addresses a different theme and is separated into a series of exercises designed to tackle the theme in bite-sized chunks. As well as information and advice, each part offers research, reading and exercises to encourage experimentation. The exercises slowly build up into the assignments that you’ll send to your tutor.
The assignments offer flexibility as to style and content and are designed to help you develop your own creative style and voice. Each assignment will ask you for:

- evidence of experimentation and a refinement of the techniques learnt in the exercises
- a consideration of appropriate media used in relation to both the subject matter and your personal aims for the work
- further experimentation – the assignments are developments, not conclusions
- evidence that you have reflected and made editorial decisions on the work you’ve made in the earlier exercises and assignments in the course.

Reading and resources

A reading list for the course is available at the end of this course guide and on the OCA website. The reading list recommends key texts and gives suggestions for further reading. Throughout the course you will also find lists of optional supplementary reading specifically connected to the content of each project. This material will give added depth and context to your study but is not required reading. Record your thoughts, reactions and critical reflections on your reading in your learning log; this will be helpful when you come to work on your essay towards the end of the course. The online reading list on the OCA website is updated regularly, so check this for recently published recommendations. As well as the reading list, you’ll find a short glossary of artistic terms and a list of suppliers of artists’ materials at the end of this course guide.

Referencing your reading

Whenever you read something that you might want to refer to in your projects and assignments, get into the habit of taking down the full reference to the book, article or website straight away. You must fully reference any other work that you draw on if you plan to go for formal assessment. To do this you should use the Harvard system of referencing – there is a guide to referencing using the Harvard system on the OCA student website: www.oca-student.com/resource-type/academic-referencing. Getting down the full reference at the time will save you the frustration of having to hunt for the details of a half-remembered reference long after the event – and ensure that you don’t inadvertently plagiarise someone else’s work.

OCA website and forums

There are lots of other OCA students currently studying Printmaking. Use the OCA website forums as a place to meet them, share experiences and to learn from one another. The forums are a great place to ask questions of other students, perhaps from those who have already done the course. The OCA student website also contains resource material and links to online archives you’ll need to use. You may want to start by logging onto the forums and introducing yourself. Find out who else is on the course and say hello.
Introduction

Why printmaking?

Communication of an idea in a visual form can take many forms. The world of printmaking offers a wide range of techniques and processes for us to express ourselves.

These are grouped into 5 main categories:

- Relief methods where the print is taken directly from the raised surface of the print block. These include woodcut, wood engraving and linocut.
- Intaglio methods where the print is made from an incised line in the surface of a metal plate or other flat surface. These include etching, drypoint, engraving, aquatint and mezzotint. A collagraph is an intaglio print taken directly from a prepared collage or incised surface which can contain a range of different textures and lines.
- Planographic methods where the print is made from a flat surface. This includes lithography.
- Stencil methods where the print is made by pushing the ink through a surface or stencil. This includes screenprinting.
- Monoprinting, which is most similar to painting and, as the name suggests, makes only one impression of the print, as compared to linocut or etching where several prints can be made from the same block or plate.

All printmaking methods give unique visual effects which the artist can exploit to present images and ideas to the viewer. The manner in which an image is created through the print technique influences the way in which the artist designs and plans the work, and the character of the final piece.

This course has been designed to allow you to explore various printmaking techniques that you can learn at home without the need for complicated equipment or materials. You will be introduced to monoprinting, relief printing, collagraph prints and combined processes.

These are methods which do not require the use of a press or etching baths as in other intaglio methods or lithography.

Printmaking is an exciting art form capable of developing representational ideas as well as abstract images. Through the course you will be able to use forms of image-making which can be reproduced several times over.

The history of printmaking on paper is relatively short compared to that of painting or sculpture. However, in a simple form, handprints are to be found in the caves at Lascaux in France dating from 15,000 years ago. It was not until the invention of the printing process in the middle of the 15th century that artists were able to explore the opportunities that mass production of printed images offered to communicate ideas. The earliest form of printing images, which preceded that of written texts, is relief printing in the form of woodcuts. A wooden block was prepared and cut into to leave the relief of an image, sometimes with a
simple text, and covered in ink. This was then printed onto paper to produce several good impressions before the wooden block wore out in the process. As a result simple woodcut prints became a cheap and relatively easy way of distributing small religious images and texts to people for their own private devotions.

However, woodcuts have one main disadvantage. The amount of detail possible in them is very limited and soon artists discovered a more suitable medium to allow them to reproduce finely observed details - the engraving. This is an intaglio print method where fine lines are scratched into a copper plate, filled with ink and printed. The artist is able to draw the most minute details directly onto the copperplate as with a hard pencil onto paper.

Together with the woodcut, engravings became the way in which images were distributed all over Europe. Artists could learn ideas from each other and reproduce, or develop them. In this way printed images from Renaissance Italy spread north to influence the work of artists such as Albrecht Durer, himself a master of the woodcutting and engraving methods.

Throughout the following centuries more and more printmaking techniques were developed and invented. As the mass distribution of printed literature increased and became cheaper to produce, so too did the reproduction of printed images. These images were often copies of master paintings and helped spread ideas and visual records round the world. The printmaking processes such as etching and engraving, mezzotint and aquatint also enabled artists to make original printed art works rather than copies of existing paintings and sell them to a wide audience. Several copies of the same image could be made from each plate to be sold to an up-and-coming middle class looking to decorate their homes with original and contemporary art work. In this way art prints could be sold more cheaply than a commissioned painting and became affordable to a greater number of people as well as providing the artist with an income.

Rembrandt’s mastery of the etching technique was widely acknowledged during his lifetime. It is clear from looking at his prints that he is using the etching medium to fully express his creative ideas. He exploits the full expressive range of the process to create works of the same quality of intensity as his paintings.

This image has been removed in the course sample due to copyright reasons.

Toulouse Lautrec, *Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret*, 1893 (colour litho)
During his lifetime Rembrandt’s etchings became highly sought after and connoisseurs formed collections of them, many of these collections still exist today and form an amazing record of the evolution of Rembrandt’s etchings.

At the same time the painter and printmaker Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione was working in Italy and is credited with the invention of the monoprint.

In England, about a century later, Hogarth achieved fame and some financial success by reproducing series of his paintings as engravings. These paintings depicting moral tales appealed to the popular market and sold in large quantities. Using his early training as a book illustrator Hogarth used the print medium to market his talents as an artist to a wider audience. Unlike Rembrandt however, he did not use the medium to express new creative ideas which were different to those he used in painting.

Colour printing processes add another range of opportunities for artists. Combining expressive and commercial opportunities for working with a wide audience, artists have exploited the use of the ‘art’ print. In the mid-19th century multi-coloured woodcuts from Japan were finding their way to Europe. These highly skilled printed images had one of the most significant influences on the development of Western contemporary artists for decades. The Japanese prints showed dramatically composed scenes where the subject could be partially cropped out of the picture, areas of flat colour and sweeping lines. Artists including Degas and Manet were among the first to adopt the ideas found in these Japanese woodcuts in their own paintings. Whistler, also an admirer of the prints, used their ideas on composition and design in his paintings, etchings and engravings.

In Paris, Toulouse Lautrec developed lithographic posters and extended the understanding of how colour could be used by mixing his own expressive palette. The influence of fashionable Japanese woodcuts is clear in his simplification of detail and the way in which bold shapes and patterns form a highly organised image.

The comparison between Rembrandt’s and Hogarth’s use of the print to reach their respective markets emphasises two of the important ways artist use prints. Firstly the print medium, whether it is relief or intaglio, lithograph or screen print, has unique expressive qualities for the artist to exploit. Once familiar with print techniques, an artist can communicate a wide range of visual / emotive ideas. Secondly the print process enables the artist to make multiple
reproductions that can be more affordable to a wider audience, which does not normally invest in original artwork.

It may surprise you to discover that many early 20th century painters explored printmaking methods as a means of creative expression. Degas, for example, developed monoprints representing his ballet dancers; and Picasso and Matisse made use of lino cutting to produce prints.

In the late 19th century Munch and Gaugin began to exploit the grain in wood as an important element in their woodcuts. Since then many artists have used opportunities to incorporate the natural texture of wood, and expressive cut marks in their prints. The German Expressionists of Die Brüke in particular use the intrinsic nature of woodcuts as a major form of expression.

Interest in printmaking continued throughout the 20th century with many artists exploring the creative possibilities of, and extending the range of, printmaking media through experimentation with new materials and techniques to express their artistic ideas. Some continue to use and develop traditional methods such as etching, lithography and woodcuts whilst others extend the expressive range to achieve new and exciting results.

Contemporary artists continue to use printmaking as a significant part of their work. David Hockney, Peter Blake, Briget Riley, Andy Warhol, Lucien Freud, Robert Rauchenburg, Kiki Smith, Louise Bourgeois and Tracey Emin have all produced prints in a variety of media alongside their paintings and installations. The 21st century has seen artists explore printmaking in new contemporary and experimental forms. The boundaries of what a print actually is and can be have been questioned.

Printmaking can be found within installation, 3D objects, site-specific artifacts, realised in very large scale, employed within animation and digital artforms. Artists such as Banksy, Jeremy Deller, Gilbert and George, Alexia Tala, Oona Grimes, Nicola Lopez, Claire Nash all are contemporary artists who have an open approach and expand the experience of printmaking.

This course aims to introduce you to the creative possibilities of a range of printmaking processes. Through a series of projects you will gain knowledge and confidence in preparing to print and printing professionally.

Using a well thought out plan to include colour, composition and design you will create a portfolio of finished prints in both relief and monoprint methods. In addition you will have the opportunity to explore collagraph, chine collé and experimental relief prints. Printmaking does require practice and you may need more than one attempt at achieving a successful print.

For the final project of this course, you will combine your experience by making a themed series of prints to demonstrate your acquired abilities in printmaking.
The course layout

Each of the 5 sections will begin with a project about gathering material and images suitable for each printmaking method or technique. They will include the figure, landscape and still life themes as well as abstract themes. You will be guided through image-making and design, specific printmaking techniques and further development of ideas.

There will be specific working practices for each printmaking method. To make sure you are working safely these will be noted at the beginning of each section. It is important that you read these and follow the simple instructions given. Particular care must be given when using sharp cutting tools or solvents.

Each printmaking method will require a variety of tools and materials. For each section the range of equipment and materials will be listed. A more comprehensive list for the whole course is given in this opening section. In addition to the suggested equipment you may like to experiment with other mark making tools and try a variety of coloured inks and papers.

Each project will be illustrated with images showing step-by-step guides to the printmaking process and further illustrations will include examples of prints by different artists.

During the projects you will be required to make notes and gather images and information to support your finished prints. Your preparatory drawings and ideas will be the starting point for your final printed image. However there will be several stages to develop before you get to the printmaking process. You will have to make decisions concerning colours, simplification of ideas, design and other visual vehicles depending on the process you are using. Each printmaking process has its own characteristics which you will be exploring through your initial subject ideas. The course will guide you through the possibilities of each process in turn.

Good preparation for a printed image is essential to ensure you have planned the process correctly and will avoid unnecessary errors. In some printmaking methods such as reduction linocut or other relief processes it is not possible to return to a previous stage in the process. This is why planning and preparation are important. There is nothing worse than reaching an advanced stage in your printmaking only to discover that you have forgotten to print an earlier stage in insufficient quantities.

The projects will start with the simplest printmaking methods and build up to the use of more complex combination methods in a final project where you will have the opportunity to develop your own original ideas making use of two or more print techniques.
Assignments

There are 5 tutor-marked assignments, one at the end of each section. When you have finished each assignment, send the following to your tutor:

- the images for the assignment (sketches, and prints)
- your sketchbook and link to your learning log

You can send your prints and sketchbook to your tutor in a portfolio, corrugated plastic types are especially strong and cheap. These can be easily secured with parcel tape for posting. You could also use good packing card. Remember paper can be easily damaged in the post so ensure your work is well packaged.

When your work is returned, your tutor will send a Tutor Report commenting constructively on the assignment and offering help and advice. You need not wait for this to arrive before starting work on the next section.

Sending assignments to your tutor - an important note

In the back of your course is a checklist to help make sure you send the right things packaged up in the right way, to your tutor, for review. Make use of this checklist every time you send your work to your tutor.

If you are an overseas student and you are sending work through the post to your tutor, mark the outside of the package you send as EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS. If not marked in this way, the courier may levy additional charges at customs.
Visual research, gathering ideas and sketches

Looking at and collecting a wide range of visual material hones our visual sense. Artists are often like magpies, gathering and collecting things that interest them, drawing on material from different sources and in many forms. These might include magazines, photographs, found objects, maps, publicity material, fabric, textural surfaces, colour samples or combinations and much more. May artists use drawing as a way to record, see and learn about the world around us in a unique way. Frequently artists will keep their visual research in a sketchbook, drawing, gluing, folding materials into the pages, however, artists today collect material using their smartphones, tablets or computers. Be curious, collect images, record ideas. Photograph and draw things that interest you. This material will be a resource you can visit time and again and can form the basis for developing your prints.

There's no right way to keep your own visual material, but you will need to source an appropriate way to store and bring it together logically, usefully and practically. Making your visual material accessible will be your own unique resource for you to visit time and again and that forms the basis for developing your prints.

Try to draw every day, even if only for a few seconds. If all else fails, do 'drawing in your head' and compose images wherever you are. Sometimes sticking in a photograph or photocopy or just a fragment of another image that is directly related to research you are doing at the time can trigger off new ideas and help to remind you of an idea later. Rework images in your sketchbook and visual material resource and develop multiple compositions and ideas from one image. It will help you to make notes about what you are working from and why you have selected the subject matter you have chosen, ideally doing this as you go along and keeping this information in your learning log. It is prudent for the development of your personal voice to be reflective and evaluative in your annotation.

As you progress through your studies you will find that you refer back to your sketchbooks, visual material and learning log. They aren't simply a way for you to display to your tutor how hard you're working – they are learning tools, so make sure they work for you. If you are using a sketchbook as one means of gathering visual information, you will find it helpful to look at this study guide on keeping sketchbooks on the Resources page of the student website.

www.oca-student.com/study-guides/keeping-sketchbooks

Using a sketchbook can provide an opportunity to experiment with different methods of working. Some students prefer to work on loose paper rather than sketchbooks and/or to use other ways of gathering and keeping visual material. Don't only use pencils and paints but also use, for example, any other drawing materials you happen to have. Using a different medium makes you look at a subject in a new way and is another means by which your drawing skill will be improved. Include any trial prints, colour tests etc. which show your thought processes in working towards your final print.
Visiting Museums, Galleries and Printmaking Workshops

Exhibitions are one of the main sources for extending your knowledge of printmaking. Reproductions in books provide important information but seeing the real thing is of the utmost importance. It is only when you see prints at first hand that you appreciate their scale and the way they have been produced. It may not be possible for you to visit major collections in large cities but you should make every effort to see print work in your vicinity.

See as many exhibitions as you can. The work you see doesn't have to be of the highest order. There is much to learn even from only fairly good or even bad prints. Look for the ideas behind the prints. Look for new subjects. Try to find prints where the artist has been grappling with the same problem that you are currently involved with. When you go to museums and galleries use any guidebooks available to plan your visit. Try to be selective and decide what you intend to see. It is only too easy to dash around everywhere, looking at everything and really seeing nothing. On each visit, select at least one work to spend a minimum of ten minutes with, looking carefully at it and thinking about the subject, material, technique, size, colour, composition, and the ideas behind the work. If it is possible, return to your chosen work at the end of your visit to see if your thoughts about it have changed. It is also worth visiting a print workshop and meeting current practicing printmakers. Many print workshops have gallery spaces within them.

Annotating

After a visit to a museum or gallery, it can be useful to annotate postcards you have bought there, photos from the gallery website, or your own sketchbook recordings of exhibits. Annotation means adding explanatory and reflective notes to the pictures. Write down why you were interested in a particular image or artifact. Consider the themes in the work and ask what is the artist trying to say to the viewer.

Analysing other artists’ work

Take every opportunity to view the work of other artists ‘in the flesh’, both historical and contemporary works in major galleries or blockbuster exhibitions and the work of contemporary artists in smaller venues or public spaces, as well as printmakers you may know. Below are some questions to consider when you’re looking at the work of other artists, not necessarily in this order.

How does it make you feel? Think about how the work makes you feel as this will be the biggest clue to the artist’s intentions. Perhaps it makes you feel sad and sombre; is this because of the dark colours the artist uses? Is it shocking? Do you empathise with the person it depicts? Once you have thought about your initial response, you can think about why it makes you feel like this.
Do you like the work? You don't have to choose a piece of work that you like, but if you do it will probably make it easier to analyse. It is often the case that the more you like a piece of work the more you have understood it. That said, analysis of a work you are not necessarily drawn to can reveal new insights and understanding, so do not shy away from what seem like more difficult choices.

What does it remind you of? This can be another artist, nature, a dream, TV, anything. As long as you explain why it reminds you of this, it is justified.

What about the composition? 'Composition' simply means the pattern your eyes make when they look at the piece, driven by the way the components of the image are arranged and factors such as colour and light. Look at the work and consciously think about where your eyes go when you look at it. Is there something in the foreground (front) that draws your eye into the centre of the work? Is the composition symmetrical? The artist will have composed the piece to enhance the meaning of the work. Even an action painting by Jackson Pollock has a form of composition. The way a piece of work is composed often shows us the artist’s hidden intentions.

This image has been removed in the course sample due to copyright reasons.

Left: Jackson Pollock, Number 16, 1949 (oil and enamel on paper mounted on masonite)
Right: Andy Warhol, Queen Beatrix of Netherlands, 1985 (silkscreen)

What style is the work in? Is the work abstract, realistic, detailed, gestural, delicate, technical? What style does it have? Why might this be?

What colour palette has the artist used? Realistic, jarring, bright, lively, clashing, dark, pale, harmonious? Remember to ask why. The artist Luc Tuymans, for example, makes paintings that look as though they are sickly and ill, and this relates to his subject matter.
What is the subject? This is an important aspect, but not necessarily the most important. Has the artist painted the subject before? How have other artists treated the same subject?

What's the significance of the title? This could give you a big clue as to the artist's intentions and may contrast with the image itself. Again, ask why.

What's the date? This could be a big clue. Try and find out what was happening at this time (the context of the painting). If a piece of work was made in 1939 in Germany, for example, it was made just before the war. What was happening in the 1960s in America when Andy Warhol made a lot of his work?

What medium has the artist used? This is how an artwork is made and what materials an it is made from.

This image has been removed in the course sample due to copyright reasons.

Luc Tuymans, Nuclear Plant, 2006 (oil on canvas)
Materials and workspace

Space required and working environment

This printmaking course has been designed to give you the opportunity to experience a variety of printmaking techniques from home. All of these can be carried out with the simplest equipment and in a relatively small clear space such as a table top or worktop. If you are organised with your process and keep only the minimum of materials around you when printing you will not need a large space.

You will need some space to keep your batches of prints laid out or hung up before they are dry. The most efficient method here is to peg your printed images on a washing line during the print run. When dry they can be stored between sheets of printmakers tissue or blotting paper.

Each stage of printmaking can be separated from the others so that they can be made in different spaces if necessary. In simple terms they are as follows:

- preparation and planning of ideas
- preparation of print plate or surface
- printing images in one or more stages
- cleaning equipment
- drying and pressing.

Each stage varies in terms of its length and complexity depending on which printmaking method you are using. Full details will be given for each project and you will be taken through each process step by step.
There are common requirements for each process and these are detailed below.

You will need access to water and enough space to soak paper for some print processes. This should be as near to your printing area as possible as the paper can dry out quickly if your working environment is warm.

Good light is essential for all art work and whether you are working on your initial ideas in your sketchbook or printing the final stages of a complicated linocut, you will need to work with a good level of light, whether this is daylight or from another source. Some artists like to use daylight lamps which emit a bright blue-white light simulating natural light. Alternatively a strong lamp or overhead light is just as suitable.

Cleaning up after printing may require the use of solvents or a cleaning agent if you are using oil-based inks. You can use low odour alternatives to white spirit, for example Citri-Wash, Mystrol or quite simply cheap vegetable oil. It is not essential to use oil-based ink as water-based inks are also available.

**Printing inks**

It is really important you purchase good quality inks suitable for the type of print process you are planning to use. There are many block printing and relief printing inks for sale and many of these are for amateur and hobby use suitable for working with children. You should contact a professional supplier to be sure you are selecting appropriate ink for the purpose and in terms of quality. Please be aware that acrylic paint is not suitable to print with.

Cheap water based inks are powdery and likely to crack, they can be difficult to mix when blending colours together and do not roll out evenly. It can be a false economy to work with inks of lesser quality and you may waste time and energy and become frustrated with the quality of your prints.

Hawthorn inks are high quality oil based ink that works beautifully for relief printing. They are also suitable for monoprint and drypoint printmaking.

Many professional print workshops and universities select these inks because of their versatility and professional results. It is worth purchasing transparent ink which while it is an ink in its own right, any amount can be added to a coloured ink in order to achieve the level of transparency and depth of colour you want. It also allows you to retain enough transparency for overprinting by other colours, thus creating new colours and combinations.

It is worth reflecting on your personal studio space and whether oil or water based inks would suit your needs best. Remember to exercise caution if you suffer from any health condition that might be exacerbated by the use of oil based inks. Contacting a printmaking supplier to discuss your needs can prove useful.
It is possible to print on a range of surfaces and many artists have experimented with a wide range of substrates. However, paper is the most commonly used support and is certainly the best material to start with as you learn about the techniques and potential of the process.

The weight and type of paper you choose for your prints is essential. As you progress, you will discover that printing on all kinds of found and recycled surfaces is possible, including found envelopes, maps, old records, letters, card, fabric, old photographs, and wood (to name but a few).

When choosing paper, it is essential you consider the surface carefully. Think about its qualities and possible benefits and disadvantages. For example, if you use photocopy paper your print is likely to crease and produce frustrating results. Paper made specifically for printmaking is not the same as watercolour paper which can be very textured, with a rough surface and this can cause problems when trying to get a consistent and even impression of your inked printing plate onto the surface of the paper. The result is a print with a lot of inconsistencies.

Good Printmaking paper will be between 200 - 300 grams depending on the brand you purchase. It is good practice for an artist to make several proofs before embarking on the final print run. When proofing use a good quality smooth cartridge paper. This is sometimes called Bread and Butter Paper and can be found here.

Japanese papers are good for hand-burnishing as they are thin and strong due to the long fibres they contain. When starting out you can even use newsprint paper to print on.

For best results with traditional hand printing use an archival paper. This is acid free paper that will stand the test of time without yellowing or wrinkling. Recommended papers for relief printmaking are:

- ZERKALL
- FABRIANO ROSASPINA
- FABRIANO UNICA
- BFK RIVES

Rollers and Lino cutters

There are a number of rollers and Lino cutters on the market and it is worth investing in a good quality roller rather than a cheap hobby one. Having a well made roller will make your printing tasks so much easier.

Hawthorne printmakers have a good quality student starter rollers. Similarly purchasing good quality lino cutters will pay dividends:

Hawthorne oil based printing inks

Schminke water based inks

Hawthorne oil based printing inks

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Lino tools are available with wooden or plastic handles. They have a variety of U shaped and V shaped gouges. It is worth experimenting with all the gouges to explore the type of line and mark the tools achieve.
Burnishing tools

When printing linocuts from home and by hand you will need something to burnish with. This is the process by which you transfer the ink from your printing plate to the surface of the support, usually paper. It is used to rub on the back of the paper to transfer the ink evenly. Many people choose to use a wooden spoon with a smooth back or a Japanese baren, the latter tool will make it easier to achieve an even print.

The Printmaking Plate

You need a surface on which to roll out your ink for both monoprinting and lino printing. This surface is referred to as a printing plate or inking slab. You can buy a printmakers laminated glass that is thick and strong from a printmaking supplier. Cheaper alternatives are Perspex or plastic inking trays.

Whether you use Perspex or glass the surface needs to be spotlessly clean. Small lumps of dust or dried ink can ruin your prints leaving raised or white spots. Always clean your plate thoroughly once you have finished working.

For more information on materials and equipment please refer to the “Materials and equipment” section at the back of this course.

Purchase printmaking tools from a Printmaking supplier.
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Health & Safety considerations

You should always consult the manufacturer’s Health & Safety guidelines before using their products. If you have sensitive skin it is worth purchasing snugly fitting latex gloves (or gloves in a material that you do not react to).

Handling/personal protection

Avoid ingestion, eye contact and prolonged skin contact. DO NOT eat, drink or smoke whilst using printmaking materials. Wash hands after use and before eating, drinking or smoking.

Storage

Avoid extremes of temperature. Store inks and paper in a cool dry place. Ensure you place the lids back on your inks or they will dry out.

Printing Professionally

Prints should be presented in a professional manner. This means prints that are centred well on the paper, have clean sharp edges and no smudgy fingerprints. Accuracy when placing the print on the paper is important. It is usual practice for an image to have a border surrounding the print. This allows the image to breathe. The size of border can vary and is in relation to the scale of the printed surface, but usually 5cm all the way round and 7cm at the bottom of your image should suffice. If you are working on A4 or A5 scale, smaller borders would be adequate.

Contemporary prints are displayed in many ways other than presentation in traditional frames and there is no imperative to window mount your work. You may see large scale prints installed using hanging magnets or large clips and collections of prints presented in book or portfolio form.

You need to present well printed and well placed prints within the paper without unwanted marks on the work. Get into the habit of handling paper with ‘paper fingers’ as illustrated below to avoid getting dirty marks on the edges of your print.
Image collagraph printed on Somerset archival paper, Michelle Keegan, *West*, 1999
Printing lino requires a simple registration method. To make a template use a sheet of paper the same size as the paper you will print on.

Position your lino on the registration paper and draw around it with a pencil pressing firmly so the line is clear.

Place a piece of tissue on top, this will prevent your registration template getting dirty with ink which could transfer to your print. The tissue will need changing with each print you take.
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Once rolled with ink your lino will be placed on top of the tissue. You can use the tissue to move your lino into the perfect registered position.
Place your printing paper on top of the template carefully. Remember to make your printing paper the same size as your template before beginning the printing process.
Part one
Introducing monoprints
Exploring personal objects

This image has been removed in the course sample due to copyright reasons.
These projects are designed to introduce you to a variety of monoprint techniques. They will start with direct techniques and develop through a series of experiments to reach more complicated prints.

In preparation for these projects you will need to have the appropriate materials, work space and image ideas. These will be listed at the beginning of each section to help you plan your work.

**Simple monoprints**

This is the simplest and most direct form of monoprinting. One impression of the print is taken from a painted plate. You will be able to paint an image directly onto a glass, perspex or metal plate using brushes and prepared inks. Once you are satisfied with your image, paper will be laid over the plate, pressure applied and the paper lifted to reveal your first monoprint.

**Equipment and materials**

You will need the following equipment for this section:

- glass plates with bevelled edges* for mixing inks (alternatives are plastic or metal sheets.
- brushes in a variety of sizes, shapes and ages
- palette knives for mixing your inks
- two printing plates – printmakers glass plastic or metal plates for your monoprints (these can be of any size). Ensure whatever you use has bevelled smooth edges so you do not cut your fingers on the edges.
- acetate sheets
- hard rubber rollers for spreading ink and rolling the back of your print
- printing inks (oil- or water-based)
- vegetable oil if using oil-based ink
- a selection of papers including some thin practice paper (cartridge or newsprint)
- old newspaper, rags and cloths for cleaning up
- disposable latex gloves (if you choose to use them)
Images and theme

It is important to remember that the image you create on the printing plate or inking surface will be transferred in reverse. When you design your image keep this in mind. It is worth making some thumbnail sketches in your sketchbook to begin to explore composition and a good tip is to use a mirror to look at the image to see how it will print when reversed. A well balanced image will be equally good when seen on your plate or reversed.

For your first monoprints, select a number of personal objects as subject matter and place them together to form a collection. As you progress, you can add or remove objects in your collection. Think carefully about why you are choosing each object. Are you interested in the shapes and form of your objects or do they have significant meaning? Ensure you make notes about your selection in your sketchbook and your learning log. When choosing your objects, think about their scale and how they could be placed together in a visually interesting way. Once you have made your selection, choose three of your objects and arrange them together to form a still life. Think about the spaces and relationship between each item. In addition, consider the shapes and forms of your objects and try to select on this basis rather than using objects that suggest a specific narrative.

Ideas for object selection

Discarded and found objects
Mechanical objects
Electrical objects such as circuit boards
Kitchen objects
Cutlery
Jewellery
Car parts
Light Bulbs
Garden equipment
Shoes
Pinecones
Natural objects
Children’s toys
Musical Instruments
Plants
Art equipment
Chairs
Toolbox tools such as pliers, saws and hammers
Research point

Spend some time exploring artists that have used still life as a theme for making artwork.

Reflect upon their subject matter and what they are trying to convey in their work and write about this in your learning log. Some examples are listed below, try to find at least two others to write about who are not on this list.

- Giorgio Morandi
- Roy Lichenstein
- Armand Fernandez
- Georgia O’Keeffe
- Judy Chicago
- Lisa Milroy
- Squeak Carnwarth.

This image has been removed in the course sample due to copyright reasons.

Giorgio Morandi, Still Life; *Natura morta*, 1953 (oil on canvas)
**Getting started**

Firstly you should arrange your workspace and try to keep to the set areas for working as described in the introduction.

Try to keep everything as clean as possible and well organised. Printmaking can become very messy if you are not careful. It is a good tip to replace your newspaper table cover as soon as it gets inky. Make sure you have a large paper bin or refuse sack nearby to throw the paper into once it has been used.

If you are using latex gloves make sure you replace them as soon as they get inky. It is essential you have clean hands or are wearing gloves when you handle the paper. You can use small pieces of folded paper [paper fingers as shown in the picture under the section on printing professionally.] to slide over the printed paper edge and lift your printed paper to avoid getting fingerprints on the edges.

Once your workspace is ready and you have everything organised prepare a pile of printing paper while your hands are clean!

For the first few experiments you do not need to use top range paper. Plain newsprint or cartridge paper is fine.

However, if one of your experiments looks so good after you ink the plate, you may decide to print it on your best paper. Always think about this before you lay the paper over the plate and have several sheets of proof and best paper prepared and ready in advance.
Preparation of the printing plate

Whether you are using a glass or metal plate it must be spotlessly clean. Small lumps of dried ink or dust can spoil your print by leaving tiny raised pockets which print as white spots.

For a new glass plate all you need to do is give it a thorough wash in warm soapy water. Dry it with a lint-free cloth. If you use a fluffy cloth it will leave fibres on the plate which will also spoil the final print.

Always clean your printing plate immediately after you finish working to prevent ink drying and becoming hard.

Health & Safety

If using glass plates for mixing inks or as printing plates, make sure that they are laid on a flat surface. Unevenness in the base surface could lead to cracking of the glass if too much pressure is applied and the glass could slip.

Preparing the inks

For your first monoprint experiments choose 3 colours that you would like to work with. You can mix the coloured printing inks as you would when painting by combining colours, adding white or other colours to achieve the hue you desire. You don’t have to accept the colour in the tub.
Project 1 Your first monoprints

Experiments in mark making and painted plates

With your chosen personal objects in front of you explore the shapes and forms you see using brush marks, experimenting with a range of brushes and working onto the plate. Remember to leave some areas of the plate unpainted - this will print as white (or the colour of the paper you are using). Monoprinting is very sensitive and demands a light touch. You will find you do not need too much ink to achieve a print. If there is too much ink on your plate blot it with newsprint. Newsprint is different from newspaper. Newsprint is a name given to thin, non-archival paper which is mainly produced for use in packaging and jobbing printing. It is a thin, diaphanous paper, like that used in phonebooks. Because it is very thin and cheap by the sheet, relief printmakers use newsprint to take proofs and to clean blocks after a printing session.

OCA Student Anna Barnard, work made during her Printmaking 1 course
Slightly thicker ink can leave a brush mark on the surface of the printing plate whereas smoother, slightly thinner ink is more likely make a smooth even line or mark. Consider the effect you are aiming for when working with the brushes and ink on the plate and experiment with different brush marks, using different speeds of working, and a range of marks such as dots, lines, patches etc. Old brushes can make very rough, expressive marks. Soft synthetic brushes leave a smooth line.

Try using old household brushes for a large sweeping marks. There are limitless possibilities which can all add to the excitement of your printmaking experience where there are endless possibilities for you to be imaginative and experimental.

Once you have completed your design on the printing plate you are ready to take your first print. Before you lay your paper and in this order, make sure:
- the edges of your printing plate are wiped clean
- the surface around your printing plate is clean and you have replaced the newspaper underneath the plate.
- that once you have moved your printing plate your hands are clean.

Next take a sheet of printing paper and gently lay it over your printing plate. Do not drop the paper straight down onto the plate as you may create air pockets which will spoil the print. Instead gently roll the paper back from the top edge of the plate to the bottom edge ensuring there is enough paper to make a border around the plate.

If you are using very thin paper it is best to place a clean sheet of newspaper or blotting paper on top to soak up any ink which may leak through the printing paper.

With the soft, lower part of your fist gently rub the back of the paper over the printing plate, making sure it does not move. Work your hand all over the paper with a firm and even pressure until the paper is ‘stuck’ to the plate. Work in all directions - top to bottom, side to side and diagonally. Alternatively you can use the back of a wooden spoon, a baren or a hard fabric pad to rub the back of the paper.

You may see an impression through the paper if the paper is thin. This is where the ink seeps through the paper. It will not affect your print but be careful not to get any ink on your hands as you may smear the back of the print.

Now you can reveal your first print.

Pick up the bottom corners of the printing paper, one in each hand. Gently pull the paper up until you have cleared the printing plate. Be careful not to drop the paper back onto the printing plate.

Lay your print ink-side-up to dry, or peg it to your washing line if you are working through several prints at once.

If there is still an impression in the ink on the printing plate you can take another print by
repeating these stages. This is called a ‘ghost’ print and might be a paler image depending on how much ink was used the first time. This can be used as the base for additional prints by printing another monoprint on top or as a unique print in its own right.

How did your print turn out? Was it as you expected?

When you have exhausted that image clean your printing surface and begin again. Rearrange your personal objects and to explore relationships between your object, include no more than three in the composition. Explore the relationship of the objects on the paper, by experimenting with the placement of the objects and their scale in relation to the scale and edges of the printing paper. Develop your use of colour further by trying different combinations. You can also try out different brush marks on the printing plate - what happens when you use detailed fine lines and/or broad brush strokes?

Monoprinting is not always predictable. There are many ways the printed image can change from the time you ink the plate to the final print. Varying the pressure on the back of the paper can make the ink more or less dense producing either a rich strong coloured print or a more subtle one.

**Further experiments**

Now you have printed a few experiments using a brush and colours, extend your range by adding more colours and using the brush in different ways or even upside down.

Feel free to experiment, what happens when you use the brush handle to draw through the ink on your printing plate? Can you create a wider range of textures by using sponges and kitchen roll to dab at the plate surface?

**Research point**

Take a look at monoprints by Degas and Tracey Emin. Can you deduce how they have been achieved? In your opinion, how successful are they and why (or why not)? What is their work about? Make notes on these points together with any other observations in your learning log.

**Drying and storing prints**

Oil-based inks will take longer to dry than water based ones. It is unlikely that you will be able to store your wet prints flat if you have made a large quantity. Peg them up, with a clothes peg at each corner, to dry on an indoor washing line and when they are finally dry, store them between sheets of blotting paper and place a weight on top to keep them flat.
Project 2 Positive and negative masked monoprints

This project explores the use of paper masks to make monoprints. This technique involves creating an image which works well as both a positive and negative shape.

The example shown is clearly influenced by Matisse’s blue nudes which exploit the use of one colour and the white of the paper. Matisse used coloured paper cut outs and stuck these onto his support to represent his vision. The figure is transformed into an expressive form which has as equal an impact as the surrounding white space. The blue figure can be seen as the positive shape and the white background as the negative one.

In another piece by Matisse, the Venus of 1952, the spaces are reversed so that the blue becomes the background and the white the figure.

The figure is transformed into an expressive form which has as equal an impact as the surrounding white space. The blue figure can be seen as the positive shape and the white background as the negative one.

In another piece by Matisse, the Venus of 1952, the spaces are reversed so that the blue becomes the background and the white the figure.

Consider this idea as you search for a subject. The overall shape is important and it does not have to have any surface detail as this will be eliminated in the simplification of the form during the print process.

Continue to develop your work using a selected personal object.
Once you have selected your object you can begin to make a design from it. Do this by drawing your form onto paper the same size as your printing plate. Try drawing the subject in one continuous line without taking your pen/pencil off the paper.

Alternatively, still working with the same size of paper, make cut-outs from a coloured paper and lay them on the surface to arrange the composition.

Do not rush this stage as it is an important part of the creative process. You may take several attempts to finalise your design and end up with a sketchbook of many alternative ideas for future projects. Be adventurous and try a number of different subjects and ideas until you have at least four that you have selected as having the most potential.

Make one careful drawing or collage, the exact size of your final printing plate, from which you will be able to make a template.
Making the masks

These images are examples of how to undertake the process.

To make the mask you will need some thin paper such as unprinted newsprint, brown paper, cheap copier paper or cartridge paper.

Using your design carefully cut out the positive shape of the image. You can now use this as a template to make your masks.

On a piece of paper the same size as your printing plate, draw the outline of your image using the template. Keep your original template in case you want to use it again.

Placing this piece with the drawing on top of several other pieces of paper the same size, cut out your templates so they are all the same. In this way you will be able to make several prints from the same design. If you run out of templates before you finish printing you can always cut some more from your original cutout.

Do not throw away the negative template you have cut. This will be the first to be used in this project. Each template can only be used once so it is wise to plan ahead and make sufficient templates for your project.
In the last project you applied the printing ink directly onto the printing plate with a brush. You will have experienced the variety of textural marks this makes.

In this project, the aim is to coat the printing plate with a smooth even layer of ink. For this you will need to use one of your hard rubber rollers.

Place a small quantity of your ink on your plate if it is not enough you can add more. If it is too much, you can scrape some off.

Take your roller and begin to roll the ink up and down, and side to side, on your inking plate. At first the ink will seem uneven. With an even and firm pressure continue spreading the ink in this way until it begins to even out.

When the ink is evenly spread on the inking plate gently roll the roller over the ink until the roller is evenly coated with a thin layer of ink.

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Research point

Look at Matisse’s blue nudes and see what you can learn from them. What makes them so powerful? Is it the simplicity, the composition, the cut out quality? Write your thoughts in your learning log.

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Inking the printing plate with rollers

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Look at Matisse’s blue nudes and see what you can learn from them. What makes them so powerful? Is it the simplicity, the composition, the cut out quality? Write your thoughts in your learning log.
Transfer your inked roller to your clean printing plate. Transfer the ink off the roller onto your printing plate by rolling it over the plate. This will take some time but continue spreading the ink until the whole surface of the printing plate is covered with an even layer of ink. You may re-ink your roller from the inking plate as many times as you find necessary.

Make sure you have sufficient ink on the plate and that it is not too transparent. If it is, apply more by re-loading the inking roller from the inking plate as many times as is necessary.

When you have finished, your printing plate will be evenly coated with ink. Now wipe the edges and transfer it to your printing area or replace the paper beneath it with clean sheets of newspaper.
Masking the printing plate

Next, place your negative mask onto your inked printing plate. This is the paper you cut out from around your image. REMEMBER the image will print back to front unless you turn the mask over at this stage.

Be careful to line up the mask with the edges of your printing plate and not to move it around as this will rough up the ink and spoil the final print.

Taking your print on paper

When the mask is in place you can gently place your paper on top of the masked plate. As before, remember to use a large piece of paper with sufficient space all the way around the plate to leave a border of at least 5cm.

Rub, or roll with a clean roller, the back of your paper starting from one corner and working consistently out from there until you have smoothed across all the paper. Repeat the rubbing until the paper sticks to the inked part of the plate which is not covered by the mask.
This rubbing is essential if the ink is to adhere to the paper. Apply good pressure to the areas where the mask is laying underneath your printing paper to ensure these edges stay sharp and defined.

When you rub the edges of the paper round the printing plate apply sufficient pressure to ensure a slight indentation appears. This is the impression of the printing plate and will be important for lining up the paper if another layer of print is to be applied.

Gently lift the print from the bottom corner checking as you lift that the paper has taken the ink. If it looks a little weak, and the ink on the printing plate is still wet, you can carefully drop the paper back onto the plate and rub the back again over the area you wish to strengthen. Lift the paper from the plate, lay on a flat surface, or peg on your line to dry.

This impression is a positive mask print where the image has printed in colour by using the negative mask.
You can take a further impression before you re-ink the printing plate. Simply re-print, being careful not to disturb the remaining ink and then follow the same printing procedure as before. This second stage print will give you a softer, less distinct ‘ghost’ image.
As a final experiment, remove the mask before taking a print of the plate.

Removing the mask before taking the third print

Lifting the third print – notice how pale the ink has become

For your next print, clean the plate then re-ink it in the same way but with a contrasting colour. Then apply the positive mask in the desired position.
Repeat the rubbing and impressing process and lift the print. This time you will have a negative print where the negative space around the image has printed and the image is left as a space.

Left: lifting the print, right: the final negative print, produced from a positive mask
Make at least two more versions of both negative and positive prints. Concentrate on achieving a smooth, uniform ink layer and an even print.

How did you find this process?

Did your object work well?

Did your ink dry too quickly and not print evenly or was it easy to achieve a smooth print? Does your image work well in both its positive and negative forms?

The positive print made from a negative mask (left) and the negative print made from the positive mask (right).
Project 3 Two coloured masked monoprints

These images are only examples of how to undertake the process.

In this project you will continue to use your masks from the previous section, both positive and negative, to make a two-coloured print. You will need to prepare two printing plates of the same size, one for each colour. As previously, mix and roll out one colour onto your inking plate. Repeat for a new, contrasting colour using a clean roller and inking plate. Prepare the printing plates in the same way concentrating on achieving a smooth even layer of colour.

These images are only examples of how to undertake the process.

Icarus falling, masked monoprints in two colours. Notice where the white edges have occurred due to the misalignment of the positive and negative masks.
**Masking two printing plates**

In the previous project you placed the paper mask on the printing plate exactly as you had planned in your preparatory layout. Here you will have to repeat this accuracy twice, once for the positive mask and again for the negative one.

Take care when lining up the edges of the mask to the printing plate. You need to be as accurate as possible to avoid overlapping layers when you print. However, do not worry if your two layers do not line up. A mis-alignment can add an interesting dynamic to a print.

Carefully place the positive mask on one inked printing plate and the negative mask on the other. As they are both cut from the same template they should be identical, one leaving the negative space around your subject, the other leaving the positive shape of your subject visible.

**Printing the first masked printing plate**

Take a sheet of printing paper as in your previous project and apply it to the positive masked printing plate. That is the one where the background colour will print.

Follow the same procedure as before carefully rubbing the back of the paper to adhere the ink.

**IT IS ESSENTIAL** that you rub round the edges of the printing plate through the paper so that they become slightly indented. You will need these ‘creases’ to help you line up, or register, the print.

Next prepare your second printing plate by using your negative mask so that the image shape will print.
Registering the print paper on the printing plate

‘To register’, in terms of printing and photography is defined as ‘the exact correspondence of the position of colour components in a printed positive’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). When you make a print of any type which uses more than one colour you will need to register the paper so that the printed image lines up accurately. This can be tricky but do not be put off if your first few attempts go wrong, with practice you will gain more confidence and accuracy when registering.

![Registering the print paper on the printing plate]

In order to lay one coloured print of the same design over another, the printing paper must be perfectly aligned to match the previous printed material.

Your first impression of the print will have been rubbed over the back of the paper to leave a slight crease where your printing plate met the paper. It is important that this is clear in order to line it up with the printing plate again.

Carefully hold the printed paper with one hand and guide the top creased edge to line up with the top edge of your printing plate. With your other hand, hold the creased edge against the top edge of the printing plate and gently, and slowly, roll the printed paper down from the top over the printing plate. Be careful to match up the edges of the printing plate with the creased paper until the bottom edge matches up with the bottom of your printed image.
Once the paper is registered you can begin rubbing the back of the paper as for the first impression. Take care that the paper does not move and that you have not trapped any air bubbles. Smooth the paper firmly, working from one corner across and down the paper.

When you have finished rubbing the paper and are satisfied that the ink has taken you can lift the printing paper to reveal the print.

You have made a two-colour print where the background, or negative shape, is printed in your first selected colour; and the image, or positive shape, is printed in your second colour. If you have managed to register the two print layers correctly there will be no or little gap between the colours and no or little overlapping colour.

Sometimes the mask can stretch if you have moved it when laying it over the ink. This can also result in a mis-matched image.

If you have mis-matched your print, have another go using a new set of masks and inked printing plates and see if you can improve your technique. Registering the paper and the printing plate is a skill you will need when trying other printmaking techniques.

Occasionally artists deliberately mis-register their print layers to create a blurred or softer effect. Try a few experiments where you overlap the colours and mis-align the masks.

Next you will make a two colour mask print using the same colours but reverse the positive and negative masks. That is, use the first colour for the negative mask and the second colour for the positive mask.

Once you have mastered this process you can try new combinations of colours and shapes to create more prints. Using simple forms and colours will develop your ability to make a good design if you consider the effect the colours, shapes and the positive and negative aspects as one printed image. Every part of the print should make a statement and nothing should look unfinished or out of balance.

There are other ways of registering your prints.
Variations using masks and multi-colours

Now you have started to explore masks and printing from a printing plate you can begin to experiment. Try out some new ideas using masks, layers of colours, painted printing plates and so on.

First, make a positive masked print in a fairly light colour. In this example, orange has been used.
Next, ink your plate in a contrasting colour. In this example, yellow was used. Then lay a new mask of the same design onto your inked plate.

You are now going to print this yellow image on top of your first orange impression. Make sure your first print is dry before you use it as wet colours can bleed, creating a less distinct effect.

Preparing to print stage two – note the use of paper to cover up the surplus ink around the edge of the mask. This ensures the final print remains clean.
Finally, in a third colour prepare your inked plate with the negative mask. In this example, dark blue has been used. You will need to decide where to place your print over the ink for best effect.

The final print. Notice how each colour can be seen and where they are layered, a new colour appears.
It is best to use the lighter colours first and over print them with the darker ones. Using a printing medium can change the texture and transparency of the printing ink. You can experiment by adding more or less printing medium to coloured ink to create a transparent layer which will allow the underneath colour to show through more clearly. A heavier amount of coloured ink and less medium will have the opposite effect. However, some interesting effects can be achieved by using a transparent light coloured ink over a darker one.

There is no reason why you cannot make different layers of many colours by varying the alignment of your masks or using several different shapes of masks on one printing surface. The only important thing to remember is that the printing paper must be registered each time in the same way.

Another variation of this process is to use a mixture of different masks and leave areas of the print as white paper. The next layers can partially overlap the white and the first colour to create yet more variety. If this process is repeated several times a rich tapestry of colours and textures can be built up.

In all of these methods a simple first shape is most effective as it allows the build up of smaller areas of shape and detail. If you start with shapes which are too small they can become hidden by successive layers and not show up in the final print.

You will see from the previous projects that you have not changed the surface of the ink on the printing plate before you start to print. Now you will explore the possibilities of texturing the ink surface to add a further dimension to your final print.

For this project you will need to find items which can be impressed into your ink surface to leave a shape or texture. Be adventurous and try anything you feel will work.

OCA Student Anna Barnard, work made during her Printmaking 1 course
You can now include new objects and shapes to add to your composition.

Some obvious things are flat leaves, fabrics of varying textures, sponges, old shoe soles, rough pieces of wood, kitchen utensils, fur, kitchen foil, feathers and natural objects. The possibilities are endless so have fun.

Using an inked-up printing plate press the items into the wet ink and lift them off. You can move them around the plate a little to create a different texture, but be careful not to make the surface too smudgy as it will not produce a good print. Try out a few ideas first to see what happens.

Remember you can ink up the printing plate surface with more than one colour if you wish. Use a clean roller for each colour and do not overlap the inks.

Take a print from the printing plate in the usual way.

Try layering different texture prints on top of each other, remembering to register the paper carefully each time.

When you can see the possibilities of this process, make a print depicting a landscape or townscape using the print of different items. You will have to be creative here and translate the real textures of the landscape into the impression of your chosen objects.

More ways of adding texture to your printing plate, once it has been inked, can be explored. For example if you are using oil-based inks sprinkle drops of turpentine or white spirit over your surface and leave them for a short time before printing them. If you are using water-based inks try sprinkling a little hot water over the printing plate.

Using a cotton bud or your finger wrapped in a rag draw directly into the inked printing plate to create a design. If you find the lines do not come out clean try dipping the rag or cotton bud in a little white spirit (for oil-based ink) or water (for water-based ink). The drawn areas will print as the paper if it is your first layer, or the underneath colour if it is your second or third layer. The drawing will feel skiddy and slightly out of control. Do not try and control it, let the marks your make take on their own life and form of expression.
Back-drawing

The illustrations below are examples of how to undertake the process. You will develop your own imagery to take into print.

Another variation is back-drawing. This is where an image is impressed of the back of the paper, often with a pencil, after it has been laid over an inked printing plate. The result is a soft drawing where it is possible to achieve a considerable amount of detail.

First prepare your printing plate with a thin layer of ink. Do not be tempted to apply a thick layer as this will stick to your paper before you make your drawing. Alternatively, you can re-use your inked plate after you have taken your first print.

Next, very gently lay your paper over the inked printing plate and with one hand, hold the border of the paper to your work surface to steady the paper and prevent it moving. Do not lean or press on the paper over your printing plate.

Take your pencil or tool (you can use anything which will leave an impression.) and draw your design on the back of the paper over the inked surface. Try drawing with a piece of stick or a cotton bud for example. Remember, especially if you are including lettering, that the drawing will be printed in reverse.

When you have finished your drawing, gently lift the paper off the printing plate.

There is no limit to the number of times you can back draw a print. In fact, many different coloured layers can create a rich effect.
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Lifting the back-drawn print. You can clearly see the drawn effect.

Building up more layers of colour by back drawing onto orange and then yellow ink.

The final back-drawn print. Here, back drawing has been made in three colours.
Project 4
Textured and combination monoprints

You have explored and used a variety of monoprinting techniques. They range from smooth single coloured layers to more complicated textures, lines and coloured layers. Taking into account the opportunities for a different size and colour range in a single monoprint, this project allows you the freedom to create prints which combine two or more of the techniques you have already experienced.

Continue to use your personal objects as your subject and explore combining several layers of masks with a variety of colours. Remember to think about how colours work together and test out different possibilities. You may want to include back drawing and introduce subtle textures. Think carefully about the scale of your objects and where they are situated compositionally. Continually reflect on your results.

You can make several versions of your compositions so that you have a selection to choose from ready to send to your tutor at the end of this part of the course.

Research the monoprints of Squeak Carnwarth look at the control and accuracy of printing this artist has achieved. 

http://www.squeakcarnwath.com/Artwork_monotypes.html

Reflect on this work and your own prints in your learning log.

• Remember to take the following points into account during this project:
  • make preparatory sketches and drawings to work out compositions and ideas
  • print on a range of different papers to achieve different effects
  • ensure you print accurately and neatly without finger prints on your work.
  • keep working area and equipment as clean as possible
  • make sure you have clean hands or gloves when laying and rubbing the printing paper
  • you can print over a monoprint several times to build up texture, colours or surface
  • keep your textures simple and be bold with your masks
  • try different colour schemes for similar subjects
  • give yourself time to clean up at the end
  • dry the prints and then press them between sheets of paper to flatten them.
• you may wish to explore transparent medium with your inks. Speak to your supplier about the medium used to make your ink transparent, different manufacturers call the transparent medium different names.
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Assignment 1: Monoprints from personal objects

Aims

This assignment introduces you to monoprinting techniques through four projects. These build up your experience and skills from simple to complicated ways of making a monoprint towards a combination of ideas in Project 4. The projects cover positive and negative shapes, composition, texture, layers and visual impact.

Task 1 (Project 1)

Select four monoprints from your first project using your chosen personal objects. You should choose those where the painted print shows a full range of expressive marks used to create an image with impact. Each print should be clear and have clean edges and a good print quality and should reflect compositional and colour differences.

Task 2 (Project 2)

Select four monoprints from your second project. You should choose those where the positive and negative shapes are clear and well printed.

Task 3 (Project 3)

Select four monoprints from your third project. You should choose those which demonstrate the use of double masking which are well aligned and registered and which demonstrate a good use of colour. Select prints which show your use of multi-coloured layers and masks, textures, back drawing and impressed textures. Explain how you have achieved each effect in your learning log and include details of other ideas and experiments.

Task 4 (Project 4)

Select four monoprints from your fourth project. You should choose those which demonstrate the combination of techniques. Each print should demonstrate good registration and clean printing technique. The visual impact of each print should be strong and show a good awareness of composition, surface and colour contrast and balance.

To support your work please submit preparatory drawings, themes and ideas in your learning log and sketchbook, which you should send to your tutor.

Please send a link to your learning log.
Reflection

Before you send this assignment to your tutor, remember to review your work against the assessment criteria for this course, as directed in the introduction to this course guide. Note down your findings in your learning log/blog.

Reworking your assignment

Following feedback from your tutor you may wish to rework some of your assignment, especially if you are ultimately submitting your work for formal assessment. If you do this, make sure you reflect on what you have done, and why, in your learning log.