Intaglio printmaker

PHOTO POSITIVE LITHO PLATES INFORMATION

Materials for Photo Lithography

- Positive photo plate lithography
- Photo litho plate
- Photo litho developer
- Cotton wool or absorbent sponge
- Nitrile gloves
- Agfa remover/pens
- Gum Arabic
- Talcum powder
- Hard roller
- Turps

Image

Any drawing material pigmented in black can be used for drawing; an ideal surface for working on is True-grain. Alternatively, films prepared by computer or photocopy (although they tend to give poorer results) on to acetate or film can be used. Photo litho plates are capable of holding a degree of tone without the need of a half tone.

Ensure that the size of the drawing fits within the plate size - see below.

Exposing the Plate to the Light Source

In a dark room, or away from direct sunlight, attach the film to the plate on the emulsion side (blue) of the plate. Use Scotch magic tape instead of sellotape, to avoid a glue residue behind. For plates that are to be printed on an off-set press, an allowance for the plate grip needs to be made.
To achieve the best image. A test plate with several different exposure times can be made. Careful judgement needs to be made in assessing the most suitable exposure time for the plate. If using seconds as your unit of measurement, between 80 and 90 seconds will give you a good range of tones. For optimum results, it is recommended you try varying exposure times.

Developing the Plate

After removing the drawn film from the plate, place in a sink to develop.

Wear gloves! The developing solution is caustic, and will cause skin irritation.

Developing solutions vary in strength, start with a 50% solution, and 50% water, but keep some concentrate to hand. Pour over the plate and wipe gently with a sponge or cotton wool. Your image will begin to develop slowly. The blue emulsion in the non-image area will begin to wipe off. Once your image is fully developed, rinse thoroughly with water. Sponge off excess water from the plate, and blot with newsprint. Dry the plate in front of a fan, or with a cool hairdryer.

Processing the Plate

Intaglio printmaker
9 Playhouse Court, 62 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 0AT
Tel: 020 7928 2633 Fax: 020 7928 2711
Email: info@intaglioprintmaker.com www.intaglioprintmaker.com

You can remove any unwanted marks on the plate with photo litho correction fluid. You can also use this fluid to further develop your image by creating interesting marks and effects. When wiping off the correction fluid, ensure you wipe away from the image areas.
Using a small amount of a roll up black diluted with turps, rub up the image using a rag.
Roll up with a roll up black ink
Dry the plate and dust with French chalk
Gum the plate with thin gum and dry.

Printing the plate
Plates can be printed on an etching press as well as an offset press (although the film will need to be exposed the wrong way round).

Wash the black ink from the plate with turps
Clean off the gum with a wet sponge
Using a little printing ink diluted with turps, rub up the image to prepare for inking
Ink and damp the plate

After printing
Gum the plate
Wash off printing ink with turps
Clean off gum with water
Roll up with roll up black ink
Dry, dust with French chalk and gum plate for storage.

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