

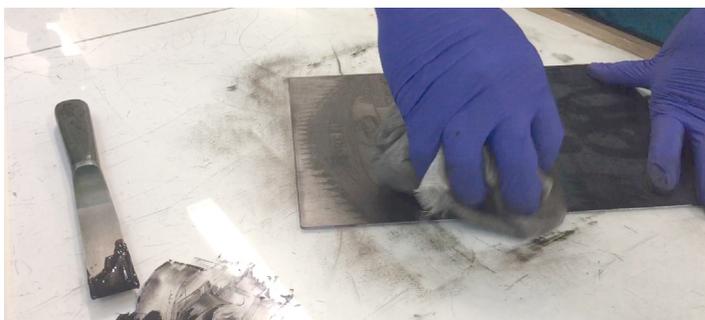
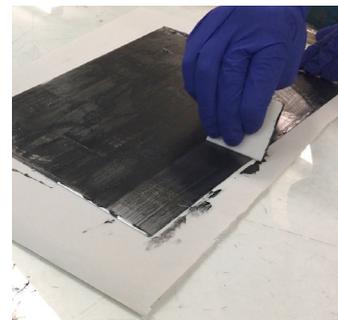
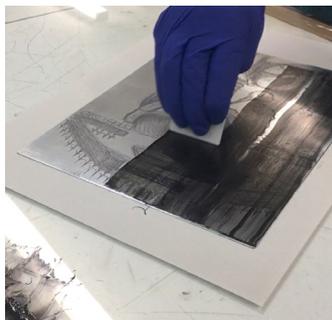
Intaglio

Inking & Printing An Intaglio Plate

The principles for inking and printing are fundamentally the same for drypoint, collagraph and acid etched plates. With experience you will discover more nuanced approaches that will benefit the different techniques.

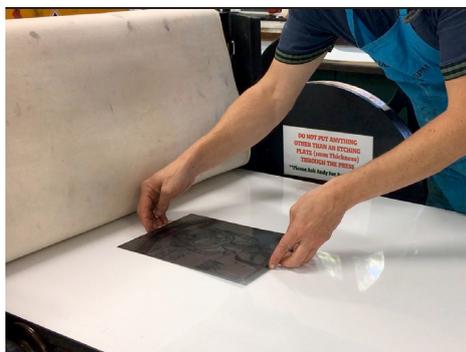
Before you begin gather together everything you will need: etching ink + modifiers, card offcuts, scrim, phonebook pages and nitrile gloves. Tear your paper to size, and soak for at least 20 minutes before printing.

01. Prepare your ink. Squeeze a small amount of ink out onto the slab, use an ink knife to massage the ink by moving and folding it on itself. Your ink should be buttery and may require a little plate oil mixing into it if it is stiff. Black ink should be mixed with a very small amount of easy wipe. Colour inks will need to be mixed with easy wipe and a small amount of etching extender.
02. Apply your ink. Pick up a bead of ink on your card offcut. Holding it upright, drag it across the plate uniformly in one direction. rotate your plate 90° and apply ink in the same manner, repeating until the plate has gone through 360°. You want to apply the ink across the plate in all directions to ensure the gorges and burrs of your lines are filled uniformly.
03. With a fresh piece of card, holding it at a 45° angle skim off the excess ink. You should only be left with a thin-ish inky film on your plate so that your imagery can be distinguished through it.
04. Fold a generous size piece of scrim into a tight ball that will fit in the palm of your hand. This should have no creases or folds on the surface, with the remainder of the material folded in on itself. The scrim pad should feel like the firm pad below your thumb.
05. With your wrist relaxed, sweep the tarlatan across the plate. Be careful not to apply pressure and over-wipe the plate - pulling the ink out of the grooves and burrs. You are just tickling the surface! Rotate the plate as you sweep across it and as the scrim becomes dirty, refold it and continue wiping with a clean part until no streaks remain.
06. Wipe the plate edges carefully and thoroughly to remove any excess ink caught there.
07. There should be a thin, almost invisible, film of ink left on the plate surface. This is called plate tone and is a recognised quality in intaglio prints. If you wish to remove more of this thin film, wipe your plate with a phone book page. Use the flat of your hand and very light pressure so you don't remove any ink from the grooves or burrs and create more streaks.
08. Wipe the plate edges carefully and thoroughly again before taking your plate to the press.



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Etching plates should be printed on either the Hunter Penrose or Rochat etching presses, ask the technician to set the pressure on the press for you before you begin. A high quality cotton rag paper such as Somerset Satin will produce the best quality prints, for proofing, Bread & Butter is an economical choice.

01. At the press, place your plate ink-side facing up on the press bed.. If you are using a registration sheet, align the plate to the markings.
02. With clean hands, remove your paper from the water bath and let the excess water run off. Blot your paper between the towel, using the rolling pin - the paper should be cold to the touch on the back of the wrist. Not bone dry nor shiny and wet.
03. Holding the paper at diagonal corners, position and lay your paper over your plate. Lay a sheet of clean newsprint, larger than your printing paper, on top.
04. Ensure nothing has been left on the press bed (rulers, pencil etc) that may damage the equipment.
05. Lay the blankets down smoothing them flat and send through the press by cranking the handle with both hands at a steady pace. Never spin the handle or crank it at excessive speed!
06. Fold the blankets back over the bar, remove the newsprint and carefully peel back your print and place it between the drying boards. Clean the press bed with Mr Muscle after pulling each print.