Introduction to Printmaking
Monoprint & Monotype Techniques

You will need:
• A range of artist’s brushes
• A Pencil
• A monotype plate, filed if necessary
• White spirit
• Cotton rags
• Intaglio etching Ink
• Thin Plate oil
• Printing paper
• Ink knife
• Brayer (roller)
• Vegetable oil (for cleanup)
• Cloth Rags (for clean up)

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

Introduction

Monotype is a form of printmaking that results in a unique one-off print. It involves the manipulation of ink on a non-porous surface, such as glass, and is probably the most painterly and closest printmaking technique to painting.

It allows for a very direct way to transfer an image from a plate, along with the potential to experiment with colour and mark-making.

Monotypes can be printed with or without the use of a press, using the back of a wooden spoon to ‘burnish’ the back of the paper and transferring the image. The use of water-based inks is also possible in producing a good quality print.

For the professional, the best results are achieved with oil-based inks and the use of an etching press as outlined below. There are various ways that images can be produced using monotype techniques that can be discovered through experimentation, here are three basic techniques.

The Additive method involves painting directly onto the Monotype plate with brushes and tools and using thinners to create washes.

The Reductive method begins with the plate covered in a thin layer of ink. The image is then drawn directly into the ink, removing it from the plate.

The Direct Offset method involves placing the paper over the plate and drawing with a ballpoint pen or pencil on the reverse of the paper. This method allows two print to be pulled from one plate, a positive and a negative.
Additive Monotype

01. Cut paper to size and put into water tray to soak.
02. Place a little of each colour on to glass for a pallet.
03. If using a transparent plate tape drawing to back of plate to work from.
04. Paint designs directly on to the plate.
05. Use white spirit to create delicate washes.
06. Use cotton rag to make marks or corrections.

Tips

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

Reductive Monotype

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

Tips

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

01. Cut paper to size and put aside (do not soak).

02. Roll out a thin and even layer of printing ink to cover the whole plate.

03. Place the plate on top of a clean sheet of newspaper.

04. Carefully place the paper directly over the inked plate.

05. From the edges of the paper feel for the corners of the plate beneath the paper and mark them.

06. Using the marked corners as a guide, draw onto the back of the paper with a pencil or press onto the paper with finger tips to create tonal areas. Be careful not to apply incidental pressure with your hands to the paper as this will create a mark.

07. Remove paper to reveal print on the reverse side.

08. The plate can also be printed in the press on dampened paper to produce a negative reductive monotype.

Tips

• A drawing can be taped to the back of the paper as a guide for making the print.

• If the ink is applied too thickly to the plate then the image will be less detailed and more likely to suffer from interference.

• Experiment with different papers to judge their effectiveness. Generally thin papers will tend to settle on top of the ink and pick up more interference whilst thicker papers may prove too difficult to draw through.
**Health and Safety**

Improper use of the press can cause serious injury and damage the equipment. Always ask the technician to set the press for you.

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**Printing**

For best results Monoprints should be printed on one of the etching presses.

01. Carefully place your monoprint plate face up on the press bed.
02. Ensure you have **Clean Hands!** Dirty hands damage the press blankets and leave finger marks on your printing paper.
03. Position the printing paper on top followed by a sheet of clean newsprint and the press blankets.
04. Wind the bed through the press, fold back the blankets, remove and dispose of the newsprint.
05. Carefully remove the printing paper from the plate and place it in the drying racks.
06. Clean the press bed with Mr Muscle after pulling each print.

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**Clean Up**

01. Put on a pair of (Black) Cleaning Gloves.
02. Scrape the excess ink off the slab with your ink knife and wipe it onto phone book pages.
03. Pour a small amount of vegetable oil onto the slab. Roll the brayers in the oil until the ink begins to dissolve.
04. With a dirty rag, wipe down the brayers and ink knives and Monotype plate. Ensure you remove all the ink, especially from the edge of the rollers. Give them a final wipe with a clean rag.
05. Use the same rag to wipe up the oil and ink on the slab and then put it in the appropriate red bin.
06. Use Mr Muscle and a blue J cloth to clean up the oil and ink residue on the glass slab. Also clean down the press bed and tympan with Mr Muscle.
07. Put everything back in its place. Newsprint, inks, bottles, rollers etc!

Thank you for leaving the studio clean and tidy for the next person!