



## Carborundum Printmaking

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Carborundum printmaking is a collagraph process in which the image is created on the plate by painting carborundum (an abrasive grit) mixed with an acrylic medium. Once dried (usually overnight), the plate is inked, wiped and printed with an etching press in the same manner as other intaglio plates. Since the carborundum mixture is built up on the plate, the paper embosses when going through the press creating a rich velvety surface. The plates are strong and can be printed many times.

### Materials for Making the Plate

- Carborundum Grit (Fine / Medium / Coarse)  
"Carborundum" is a trademark for silicon carbide. Today, Aluminum Oxide is being used as an alternative to Silicon Carbide. The grits range in particle size from fine to coarse. The higher the number the finer the particle. They are the same grades as silicon carbide.
- Plastic PETG (clear plastic)
- Styrene Plate (white plastic)
- Acrylic gloss medium
- Brushes (for brushwork)
- Brayers (for rolling flat areas of carborundum)

### Making the Plate

#### Mixing carborundum with acrylic medium

The more grit added, the darker the printed image. The size of the grit particle (fine to coarse) will also determine the tonal value, texture and amount of embossment on the final print. The following is a just a starting guide.

- **For dark areas of color**  
1 part carborundum grit to 1 part acrylic medium
- **For light areas of color**  
1 part carborundum grit to 5 parts acrylic medium

#### Tips

- Try to keep the brush strokes low and consistent on the plate. If necessary, add a little water to thin the carborundum & acrylic mixture for smooth brush strokes.
- The carborundum mixture can be rolled on the surface of the plate with a brayer. Marks can be made by wiping away areas of carborundum with a rag or stick. Work quickly and be sure to wash the brayer before the carborundum dries. The plates can also be incised with sharp tools to include drypoint techniques, and/or combined with monotype techniques.

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### **INKING THE PLATE**

#### **Materials**

- Akua Intaglio Inks
- Akua Kolor Blending Medium (to thin ink if necessary)
- Akua Intaglio Transparent base (for transparent colors or overlays)
- Printmaking Paper (Hahnemuhle Copperplate suggested)
- Tray for water or spray bottle for dampening paper
- Towel for blotting printmaking paper before printing
- Tarlatan or Toulle fabric for wiping plate (toulle fabric can be purchased at a fabric store. It is also known as wedding veil material.
- Old telephone book pages
- Newsprint paper to protect press blankets
- Etching press

#### **Steps for Inking the Plate**

The Inking, wiping & printing of carborundum plates is similar to typical traditional plates.

1. Spread Akua Intaglio ink with a dauber or plastic ink spreader on the plate.
2. Wipe with soft to medium tarlatan cloth or toulle fabric.
3. Use telephone pages to wipe the lighter areas clean.

### **PRINTING THE PLATE**

1. Place the inked plate face up on the press bed.
2. The printing paper needs to be dampened so it will be soft enough to print. To dampen, place the paper in a water tray and soak for about 30 minutes. (Longer if it the paper is very thick)
3. Blot the paper with a towel before printing. Be sure the paper is evenly dampened with no puddles of water on the surface.
4. Place the printing paper on top of the plate.
5. Place newsprint over the printing paper to protect the blankets.
6. Place blankets on top and run through the press.

**Rostow & Jung Akua Inks**  
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