

ABSTRACT: POLYESTER LITHOGRAPHY OR PRONTO PLATE PRINTMAKING

PRESENTER: Shelley Ryde

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

TIME: 3 Hours

PRONTO PLATE PRINTMAKING

Pronto Plate is a print technique that utilises specially manufactured polyester plates suitable for use in a laser printer. It is based on the principles of lithographic printmaking processes.

This workshop will provide teaching strategies for introducing Pronto Plate Lithography in the classroom. The approaches presented will apply to students from Year 7 to senior print students in Year 13. Participants will learn:

- How to use photo collages to create compositions.
- How to integrate different digital processes with handmade images.
- How to edit photocopies.
- How to work directly on the plate.

Student exemplars shown in this workshop participated in Inquiry-Based Learning Programmes designed to maximise creative opportunities and independent artmaking.

PRINTING PROCESS & TECHNIQUES

This process is excellent for drawing-based prints and can also be used to build a series of colour layers on a print.

- **Colour Separation:** Different plates should be used for separate colours using an additive process, or the plate can be printed using the 'rainbow roll' method.
- **Hand-Drawn Images:** Can be printed directly from the plate.
- **Image Transfer:** Photographs, collages, and drawings can be transferred to the plate using a laser photocopier (not an inkjet).
- **Ink Requirement:** Oil-based printing inks must be used.
- **Combination with Other Print Techniques:** This process can be combined with other methods, such as:
 - Drypoint
 - Monotype
 - Silkscreen
 - Collagraph

- Digital (photocopied onto art paper using a laser printer)

SUITABLE DRAWING MEDIA

Any oil-based drawing media is suitable for direct drawing onto the plate, including:

- Permanent black markers or pens
- Black spray paint
- Black crayons
- Lithographic crayons
- Ink & tusche

If the drawing is intended to be transferred using a laser printer, additional media such as charcoal and pencil can be used. Photocopying drawings onto the plate allows for:

- Durability of the image
- Replacement in case of errors in printing
- Ease of cleaning (note: a cleaner is available, but it removes the original drawings as well)

WHAT IS POLYESTER LITHOGRAPHY?

Polyester Plate or “Pronto Plate” Lithography is a printing process that enables artists to combine visual elements from:

- Photographs
- Digital software
- Drawn images

This technique uses digital technology to create images directly on the plate. The plates can be directly imaged by laser printers, eliminating the need for film negatives or positives.

Alternatively, images can be hand-drawn directly onto the plate. An etching press and oil-based inks are required to produce the prints. Before inking, the Pronto Plate is treated with water mixed with a fountain solution, following the same principles as Stone Lithography.

HOW IS PRONTO PLATE DIFFERENT FROM STONE LITHOGRAPHY?

Lithography ((lithos) 'stone' & (gráphō) 'to write') is a planographic printing method based on the incompatibility of oil and water. Traditionally:

- The image was drawn with a greasy substance (such as oil or wax) onto a smooth, flat limestone plate.
- The stone was then treated with a mixture of weak acid and gum Arabic to make it hydrophilic (water-attracting).

The term **lithograph** is only used for fine art prints and not for reproductions made using modern commercial lithographic methods.

This workshop will provide hands-on experience and insight into the application of Pronto Plate Lithography, enhancing creative possibilities for students and for teachers interested in advancing their printmaking vocabulary.