

Inks, Modifiers, and Processes

Read labels carefully to make sure you are using the correct ink. Is it an etching, relief or lithographic ink?

We have several types of ink in the studio, each designed for a specific process: Handschy Inks for lithography and monotype, Graphic Chemical Perfection Palette Inks for intaglio and relief, and monotype, and a variety of black inks. Each of the black inks are formulated for the processes they are to be used for. The color inks however need to be modified for the process you intend to use them for.

Ink Properties

Body: This is the stiffness or viscosity of the ink. Does it stand up like putty or flow like honey?

Length: This can be judged by putting an ink knife in the ink and then drawing the knife straight up. The stream or thread of ink will indicate the whether the ink is long or short.

Tack: This is how sticky the ink is.

Modifiers

Magnesium carbonate: A white powder that adds body and stiffens the ink while also reducing length.

Varnishes: #00, #1 Greatly reduces body, tack and length, increases greasiness.

#3: Reduces tack but retains some length, increases greasiness, gives a light body.

#7-8: Increases tack, and length, and is needed in litho to help hold the pigments in the ink.

Setswell/Sureset: Reduces body, length and tack. Slows drying slightly, and produces a matte finish to inks when dry.

Easy Wipe: Reduces length, tack, and body. Add to color inks for intaglio.

Relief Printing

Ink Properties: Medium body, short-medium length, light tack. Your ink should relax fairly easily into a pool after mixing.

Black: Daniel Smith Traditional Relief Black.

Color: Handschy Litho Inks + #1 Litho Varnish. A touch of Setswell or Sureset is also needed to reduce tack. Perfection Palette inks should be good from the can, but modify if needed with a 1-3 drops of #1 or a touch of Setswell or Sureset.

Intaglio

Ink Properties: Ink should be quite short, with little body and tack. If your ink is too long or tacky it will be difficult to wipe and leave very noticeable plate tone.

Black: Graphic Chemical Etching Bone Black #514

Color: Graphic Chemical Perfection Palette Inks + small amount of Easy Wipe. #00 or #1 will also help, and may be needed in addition to a small amount of easy wipe.

Lithography: Stone and Plates

Ink Properties: Heavy, stiff body, moderate length. The pile of ink should hold its shape, or relax very slowly on slab.

Black: Daniel Smith Crayon Black.

Color: Handschy Color Litho Ink + Magnesium Carbonate if needed. Add #7-8 Varnish to Magenta, Rubine Red, Process Cyan or if the color 'bleeds' from the ink. For flats, ink should have less body and tack. If needed add a touch of Setswell or #1 when printing flats.

Polyester Plate Litho

Black: 50% Graphic Chemical Lithographic Black #1796 + 50% Crayon Black.

Color: Do not modify as stiff or as tacky as for plates or stones.

Monotype

Take out only small amounts of ink!

Any Ink will work fine. I usually use color litho inks, and etching black. You will need to add a fair bit of #00 varnish and a touch of setswell to make the ink soft and pliable to easily paint with.

Black: Graphic Chemical Etching Bone Black #514

Color: Handschy Color Litho Ink + #0000 Varnish, and Setswell or Sureset.