

## Mono-Printing

The Monotype, once regarded as the ugly stepchild of printmaking, has slowly found its way back into popularity. The Printmaking Fascists consider this method for making images to be far too easy and “painterly” to be REAL Printmaking. When they controlled the world they banned Monotypes from competitive exhibits and looked down on anybody who made them. But people have always loved the way the Monotypes look, and artists have been attracted to the process even though it was shunned by some Printmaking specialists. The monotype is now found in college art departments, museums, galleries, and competitive exhibitions. A monotype is a mix of painting, drawing, and printmaking, providing a unique option for the multi media artist.

There are two techniques in Printmaking with “mono” as a prefix. They are easily confused but for the record here’s the correct definition of each:

**Monoprint:** This is what you call a print produced by using a previously worked plate (with lines etched into it, for example) and creating a single, un-repeatable, impression from it. For example: if you ink and wipe a plate in black as you would a normal etching and then paint colored ink over the surface of it and run it through the press all at once the result is called a “monoprint”.

**Monotype:** This is what you call a unique impression where the plate used to hold the ink is “clean”; there are no permanent marks on the plate. Each monotype is different and unique from the last.

The only people who **really** care about the difference between a “monoprint” and a “monotype” are professors, dealers, collectors, and the Printmaking Fascists. For our purposes we will refer to all of the things produced as a result of these activities as “Monoprints”.

The general idea of using a plate to offset ink onto paper has probably been around for a long time. If you put an artist next to a press they will start running all sorts of things through (watch the blankets!). As far as Art History is concerned, Monotype has only been around for the last several hundred years.

There is no end to the varying ways of creating new and interesting images with the Monotype. Artists such as Giovanni Castiglione, William Blake, Edgar Degas, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Georges Rouault, and Joan Miro all worked in this medium. Some modern artists also involved with Monotype include Mary Frank, Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, and Helen Frankenthaler.



**Marie Pascoe**  
Monotype Assignment

A Monotype will always give you something different than the customary painting or drawing. There is an exciting element of surprise when you see how the press has transformed the image and what your plate reveals in reverse.

A Monotype is also a great way to create interesting backgrounds and textures for other forms of printmaking.

The Monotype is a medium left open to whatever the imagination can throw at it.

To create a Monotype you may use a variety of additive and subtractive methods to get ink or paint onto a plate. Your plate can be zinc, copper, Plexiglas, or any other substrate strong enough to withstand the pressure of the press. You must also be careful to avoid using anything that might damage the felts or the press bed.

To make a monoprint start with a clean plate with beveled edges. If you choose plex (which is an inexpensive way to go) make sure to roughen up the surface so the paint will adhere easily.

There are two ways to work when you are monoprinting. The first technique is to put ink onto the plate using brushes, brayers, cards, putty knives, again anything you can think of. Apply the ink on the plate with a brush or other tool just like you would paint on a canvas (but backwards of course!). This is the ADDITIVE method of monoprinting.

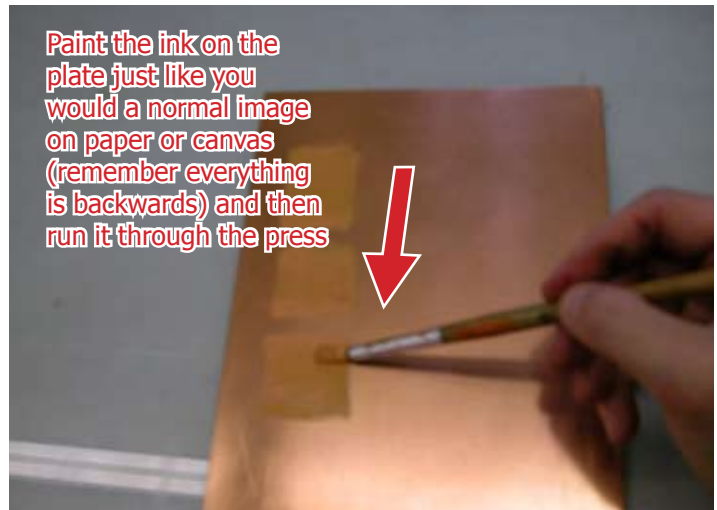
The second method is SUBTRACTIVE. Roll out a flat color with a brayer on the surface of the plate. You may then "draw" using the ends of paintbrushes, q-tips, dry brushes or anything else you can think of to remove ink, revealing blank areas for your paper color to show through.

You can create textures and interesting shapes using stencils, lace, leaves, thin wire, anything thin enough and strong enough to go through the press.

You can paint onto the plate just as you would a canvas (just keep the ink in a thin layer or it will squish and move all over in the press).



Mix up the ink as you would for a normal painting. Use the #00 plate oil to thin the ink if needed



Paint the ink on the plate just like you would a normal image on paper or canvas (remember everything is backwards) and then run it through the press



You can also use a reductive method of mono-printing by rolling on a solid color with a roller

Monoprints can be layered over each other or completed all in one printing. You can run your painted plate and paper through the press once or you can continue to layer paint and texture onto your plate and run it multiple times creating rich images with strong depth.

It's best to use light colors first and then work your way to the darker values.

Monoprints are run through the press just like a normal etching, but you should back the pressure off a bit, in our shop to 2:30. You must be careful not to do anything stupid that might cause ink to get on the felts (use several pieces of newsprint to protect them if you have a really juicy plate to print, etc...).

## Techniques for monoprinting

Stamping ink onto the plate.

Inking up a texture and offsetting it on the plate by burnishing.

Using a texture (for example lace) to remove ink off the surface of a plate.

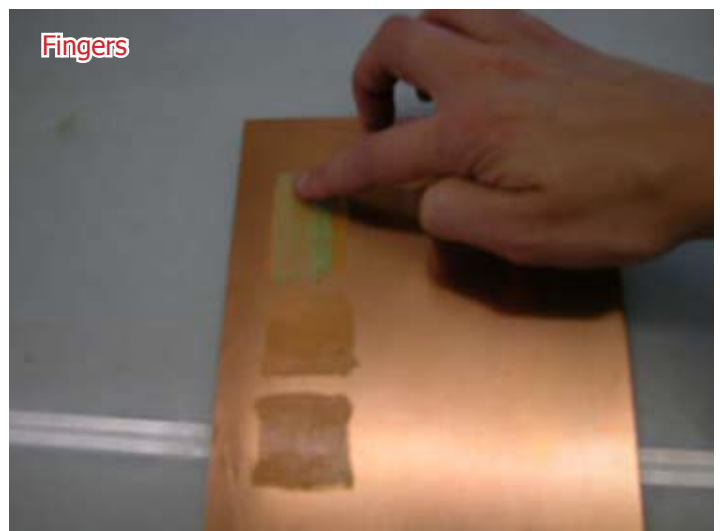
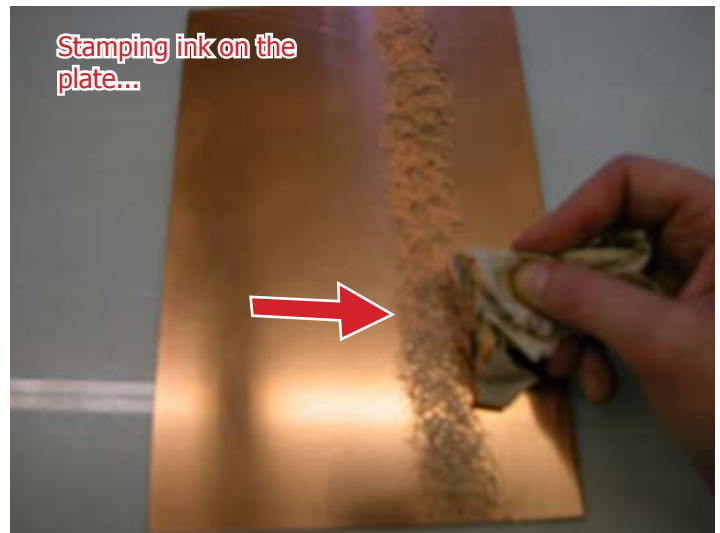
Using mineral spirits or plate oil to remove or thin the ink.

Drawing "white" lines with a brush handle, etc. through an inked plate.

Wiping the plate with a tarlatan to give it that "swirled" look that the kids are just wild about these days...

Cutting stencils out of paper and using a roller to put the patterns on the plate.

Remember - there are NO RULES - anything that produces good images is fair game. Experiment and innovate!

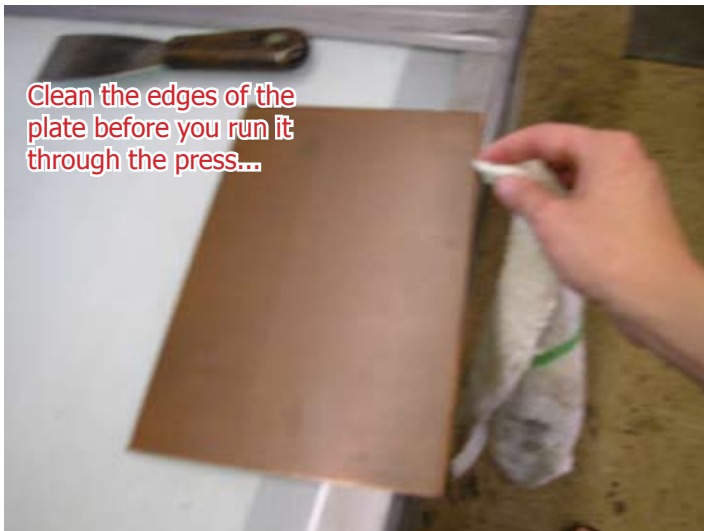




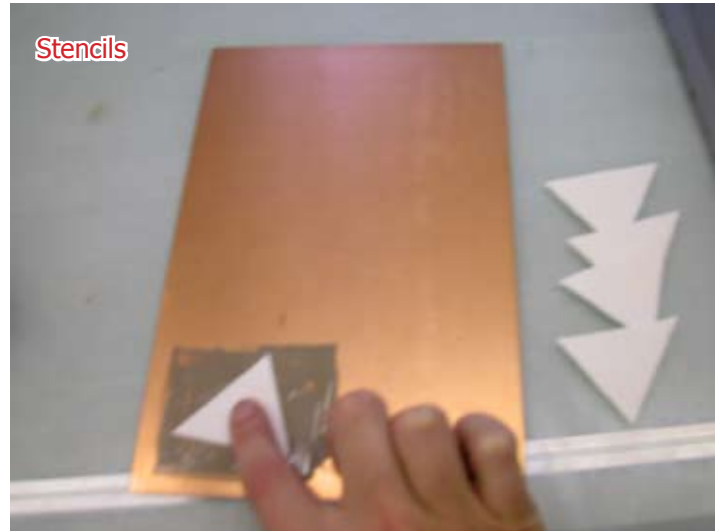
**Summer Cushman**  
Monotype and Mixed media



Painting with the putty knife



Clean the edges of the plate before you run it through the press...



Stencils



A set of steps illustrating how a monotype can be done...



After printing you may clean the plate with vegetable oil and simple green - then make a new mono-print