

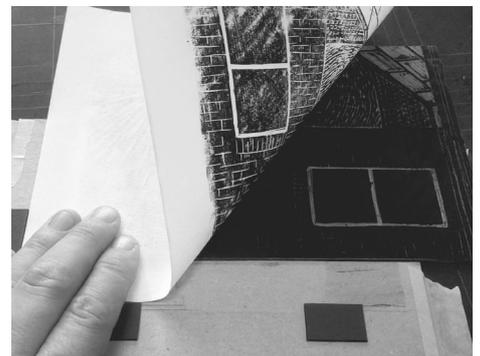
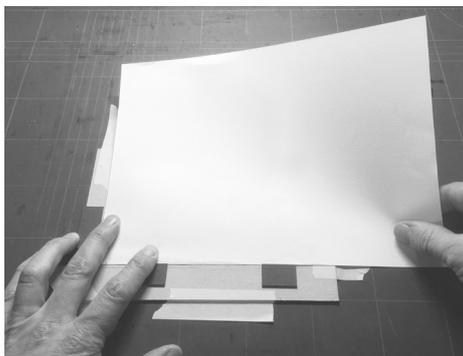
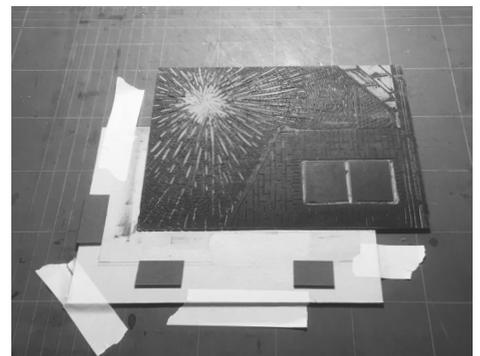
Printing Without a Press

Burnishing - Hand Printing

Relief prints can also be printed without a press. The print is made by burnishing, where the paper is gently pressed down onto the inked block and rubbed firmly. This method of printing is employed to great effect in the American and Japanese styles of relief printing.

It is useful for taking proofs during the early development of a block or, it can be employed during the printing stage allowing for a variety of tonal qualities to be pulled from a single block.

Traditionally a barren is used to apply pressure to the back of the printing paper when hand printing, however, a good alternative is a wood or metal spoon.



01. Roll out the oil or water based ink on a slab until you have a smooth thin film of ink. The ink should have a velvety texture that makes a slight hissing sound.
02. Roll the ink out onto the block, charging the roller with ink a few times.
03. For accurate printing, use a registration jig made from mountboard and position the block into it.
04. Position the printing paper onto the inked surface and up against the stops of the registration jig.
05. Use the bowl of the spoon against the back of the paper, apply very firm pressure and move the spoon across all areas of the surface of the block.
06. Hold the paper firmly in place and gently lift a corner check how well it is printing and to determine whether more pressure or further burnishing is required.

Tips

- Better prints are achieved with a thin layer of ink and heavy rubbing rather than heavy inking and light rubbing.
- Water-based inks can dry very quickly while working. A water mister can help alleviate this by gently spraying onto the ink slab and working the ink when drying begins.
- A wide variety of smooth paper can be used for hand printing. Mould made papers will need to be lightly dampened prior to printing to aid the transfer of ink.
- To dampen the paper, lightly spray the sheets with water and wrap them in a plastic bag the day before printing. this will allow the moisture to permeate the paper evenly.
- Placing a piece of newsprint over the printing paper will prevent any friction and tearing of the paper by the spoon.