

Smart Plate Lithography Printing

You will need 8.5" x 11" paper, Lithography inks, Smart Plate (plastic sheet) paper, brayers, ink trays or glass sheet, large plastic bowl, water, a large CLEAN sponge, permanent markers, Smart Plate Etching Solution, Gum Arabic (Or Smart Plate fountain solution), wiping pads (make-up pads or cotton balls), wooden spoons, latex gloves, drying rack, a bulletin board you can staple to and staplers.

First set all the materials out and have a clear bold drawing to work from. This method is wet so have a work area you can wipe dry later.

Set clear Smart Plate (plastic sheet) over drawing and copy it with a permanent marker onto the Smart Plate. Be sure to develop an image in the center of plastic that will leave you lots of boarder around image – later, when you are rolling on ink you DO NOT want the brayer to roll over the edges of the plastic, ink will stick to these edges.

Fill the basin half full of water and add Gum Arabic [1/8th of a cup to Quart of water] set wiping pads close to it (basin). Wearing gloves thoroughly wet one wiping pad with Smart Plate Etching Solution and wipe entire permanent marker image for thirty(30) seconds. Throw this first wiping pad away. With a second new wiping pad, wipe the entire image again to remove Smart Plate Etching Solution. Then using large Clean sponge, wetted in large basin wipe entire Smart Plate sheet with water/Gum Arabic solution. After wiping and wringing out the sponge five times, set sponge aside.

Prepare ink in an ink tray or on a glass sheet use lithography ink and with a brayer roll out a thin film of ink consistently on tray or glass. Listen for tack sound. Be sure your Lithography plastic has some water under it - so the sheet is solidly in contact with table surface or the brayer will make it slide around. Then roll ink onto Smart Plate plastic sheet in two directions, two times so that some ink adheres to formerly permanent marker areas. Stop set brayer down and wipe surface with water -the plastic must be kept wet. Then roll ink again in two directions, two times so that some ink adheres to formerly permanent marker areas. Keep repeating this process so that it appears that all the black areas have adhered with ink.

Now, you're ready to print.

Move your plastic to a dryer area. Take paper that has been pre-dampened and set it over the Smart Plate sheet - good side of the paper down. Use a barren or wooden spoon to rub (press) the back of the paper (but use a printing press if you have it.) When you think you have covered all of the image twice, stop and slowly peel up the paper.

Hold it by the corners and prep the paper to dry either:

(A) by stapling your paper/print to a soft bulletin board drying wall staple around the very outside edges not in the image area.

(B) by pressing it under weighted boards with either newsprint or cotton blotters. If you use newsprint this needs to be changed at least once to not warp boards.

(C) leave on drying rack and later pressed between boards to remove waviness.