

DESIGN MATTERS TV

Collagraph - Making plates

with Laura Kemshall

Collagraph is a printmaking technique that is related to collage. In today's show I used a piece of heavy card such as mountboard or the back board from an old sketchbook as a plate. I created the design on the plate using various sticky tapes such as parcel tape and masking tape. Here's a reminder of what to do:

Cut your cardboard plate to size (this is determined by the size of the press that you'll be using to print with. If you're using a pasta machine then a plate around 4" x 5" should be fine). With a pencil lightly draw a guideline for your design. From tape or sticky-back plastic, cut shapes and apply them to the plate. Areas covered with the smoothest tape/plastic film will print palest, masking tape will print darker, uncovered card darker still.

You can also use craft stickers, hole reinforcing stickers, etc. to create your design. Aim for a variety of types of surface from shiny to matte. Ensure all edges are firmly adhered to the card. If they are lifting at this point then they'll be very troublesome at the inking stage.

Add line by scoring into the card plate carefully with a sharp knife, needle or stiletto. This technique works best on mountboard type card where the surface is very smooth and non-absorbent as the contrast is the greatest.

Next time we'll print from the card collagraph plates. Here's a reminder of what you'll need:

A printing press (if you don't have access to an etching press then use a pasta machine instead)

Off-cuts of wadding/batting larger than the paper you'll print on

Paper - heavy cartridge or watercolour are both good

Shallow tray (or nearby sink)

Ink (we'll be using oil-based etching ink. If you don't have any then oil paint can be substituted for experimenting. Etching ink is expensive and a little goes a long way so if you buy any, just get a small tin until you know if you're going to love this technique!)

Scrap of muslin/tarlatan fabric

Scraps of heavy weight card and scrap paper (we use a telephone directory)

Old towel

Old clothes or apron, gloves if you like.

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