

Christiane Gossel's tips and papers.

"The technique supports and strengthens the theme. I strive after a communication with technique and material. Exchanging theory and practice of the idea and the realisation of the idea, it's a continuous process, but also a confrontation about how to handle the material and how to handle the technique and it's conventional ways of treating it."

Photopolymer is a relatively young etching technique, the goal of it is being environment friendly (no usage of terpenines) but also being able to obtain different tints in Gray and fine lines. It brings back memories about the photographic technique, however with extensive graphical possibilities. It is possible to etch (pure-etch) and to not etch (non-etch), more info to find on: www.polymetaal.nl.

At the moment I use the 'pure-etch', for the etched lines. I'm not particularly clear about how the non-etch film differs from the pure-etch film, as I haven't used it too often, I started sailing on my former etch experience. The visible engraved line in the plate was my motivation, that doesn't mean that I won't be using the non-etch in the future. Advantage of the non-etch is that you won't need a sour bath; disadvantage is you can't print as many prints. For me this isn't such a problem, as I normally don't print many, only for a commissioned order.

I photograph or photocopy my large pencil drawings, 100cm x 130 cm. Those I bring on film. Important are the blacks, finding the right balance in the blacks that are well etch-able!

The variations in the blacks create space for variations, morphing, lines that disappear from a theme, in film and also in printing.

The subject gets placed on film and exposed on a copper plate that is covered with a light sensitive film ('non-etch' film, or 'pure-etch' film).

The subject can originate from computer print, photocopy drawing (on chalk paper) and brought to film.

After exposing the film gets developed and etched. I am deeply impressed by this technique; it's possibilities, the fine lines and dissolving the lines into dots.

Points of interest for the photopolymer technique

No¹

Copper or zinc: copper is more expensive, the adhesiveness of the copper for 'pure-etch' is undoubtedly better but zinc will do too. For 'non-etch' zinc will do, copper isn't necessary.

'pure-etch on zinc': don't work the edges of the plate, a small burr can cause the film not to adhere or that little bubbles between film and plate will occur.

No²

Computer print/copy/chalk paper: every medium has its own exposure time.

With a **computer print** the ink gets injected onto the film, the ink is thinner/lighter.

A **copy** is printed in ink so thicker on film.

If you wish to draw on **chalk paper** with ink (East Indian ink) or with pencil one has to account for exposure time, but also the etch-ability. Exposure dictates etch-ability.

No³

Greaseproof plate: Use cleaning liquids without lemon. Moist the plate with a plant sprayer. 3:1 (distilled) water: alcohol, and put the film onto the plate. (For more info check out www.polymetaal.nl)

No⁴

Exposure cabinet: Vacuum between plate and subject must be complete: otherwise the chances are you get bubbles. There where bubbles are the film can't get developed.

No⁵

To press and to develop: Through the printing press, then leave the laminated plate in a black garbage bag for at least 24 hours.

No⁶

Temperature and developing bath: between 22 and 24 degrees Celsius. Be aware to take into account the environment and changing the baths by calculating the temp, important is not too warm, not too long.

No⁷

Developing time: +/- 2.45 min, continuous dabbing, taking away the moist. Before etching the plate (second time), the film has to be real dry. (Harden, in a light space or outside about 30 minutes)

My experience with etching on zinc taught me to peel off the film after etching, as the film loosens around the etched lines, so I only use it once.

Personally I don't mind, the tone by cleaning the surface of the plate, before printing, stays clearly object of importance.

No⁸

Drying: with hair dryer the film gets dry quickly, the longer the better. Drying in a special drying cabinet is possible too, but for me the hair dryer dries better.

