

## Linocut – Reduction Technique

Reduction linocuts are prints made by gradually reducing the printable areas of a lino block. This process involves working with a single block, printing a colour, cutting more of the block, printing this new *reduced* image over the first print, and so forth depending on the number of colours the artist wants to print in a single image. The key to successfully making a reduction cut is a little planning and careful registration.

**Suitable papers** - Most types of paper are suitable but try to avoid any that have a shiny texture such as tracing paper as the ink will not dry. Textured papers will give you a textured print.

**Suitable inks** - Use oil based relief ink for this process as they have a high percentage of pigment colour and will give you a good solid block of tone.

### Preparing your image and creating a registration system

**You will need:** Tracing paper, lino block, pencil, paper (newsprint for proofing colours/design registration etc. and printmaking paper for final prints)

#### **Method**

##### **A. Tear paper to the same size**

You should prepare more paper than you think you'll need (it's easy to make mistakes in reduction prints as there are so many steps to keep track of). **Tear all the sheets (editioning paper and proofing paper) to the exact same dimensions.** Neatly stack all the sheets in two piles, one for editioning and another pile that is newsprint (proofing).

##### **B. Create a registration sheet (jig) so that you can position your lino when printing and register your colours on top of each other.**

Take a piece of newsprint, place your lino plate in the centre of the paper and draw around it. Draw a 'T for Top' on your jig and on the back of your lino so you place it down the same way every time. Find the centre of this drawn rectangle (vertically and horizontally) and draw a crossed line with a pencil through the box and to each of the edges of the whole piece of paper.

Place a cut piece of paper over the drawn square and centrally align the paper with the lines you have drawn. The drawn square should be positioned in the centre of the paper. Draw four crosses at each of the corners of your printing paper. The square and these crosses will tell you where to place your plate and paper when printing – ensuring the different colours of your print register correctly.

##### **C. Draw out your image and label your coloured areas.**

On tracing paper, draw around your lino block and make a plan of your image and what colours you will use where.

### Creating and cutting your printing block

**You will need:** Tracing paper plan, lino block, soft pencil and lino cutting tools

**Method**

- A.** Plan to print the lightest and most transparent colours first and the darkest/opaque colours last. Making 'separations' of your preliminary drawing may be helpful; to do this, use tracing paper to trace a separate sheet for each area of colour.
- B.** Using the plan of your lightest colour (or white) trace these shapes onto your lino block by reverse tracing your image on the tracing paper and scribbling on the back of it to transfer the marks onto the lino. Remember they will be back to front. Cut out these areas with lino cutting tools.

**Inking up and printing your lino block** – *ensure you've had a relief press induction first.*

**PPE;** Disposable gloves, apron

**Method**

- A.** Clean your block of any debris or dust.
- B.** Mix your lightest colour and roll out a patch of ink.
- C.** Ink up your lino block with a solid even coverage.
- D.** Place your block onto your registration jig, align your printing paper.
- E.** Cover with a sheet of tissue paper and run through the relief press. Place prints on the drying rack to dry. Repeat until you have printed your edition.
- F.** Clean your block of the first colour and carve out the areas of your second colour (the second lightest). Repeat the above process

**Cleaning up**

**PPE;** Disposable gloves, apron

**Method:**

- A.** Using your palette knife scrape up any ink off the table into a dirty rag and place in the soiled rags bin.
- B.** Use vegetable oil and a semi-dirty rag to clean off any excess ink from the table and your lino plates. Place this dirty rag into the soiled rags bin.
- C.** Use a clean rag and soap solution to wipe any oily residue from the table or your plates.
- D.** Roll your dirty roller onto some newspaper to remove the majority of ink. Use vegetable oil and soap solution to clean any ink off the roller and handle.
- E.** Use slig soap to clean your hands. If you have a nut allergy use vegetable oil and soap.

**Drying period**

Your prints will take at least overnight to dry thoroughly, longer if on non absorbent paper. Store dry prints wrapped in tissue paper.

**Useful contacts/resources**

Angie Lewin - [www.angielewin.co.uk](http://www.angielewin.co.uk)

Hawthorn Printmakers - <http://hawthornprintmaker.com/>

Handprinted - <http://www.handprinted.co.uk/>