

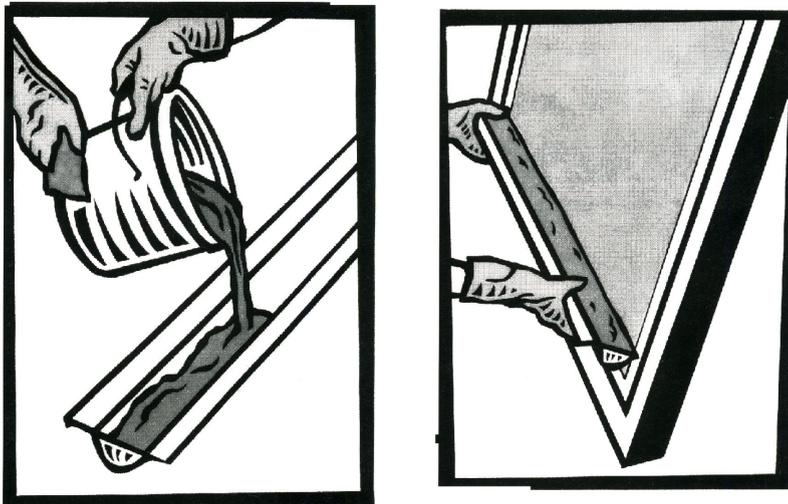
Screen Printing onto Paper

Most screen printing techniques use a stencil which ink is pushed through to create an image. This stencil can be made from thin cut out paper taped to the back of a screen or can be created using photosensitive emulsion with digital or hand drawn imagery.

A **positive** is the term used for the artwork that you expose with UV light onto a screen coated with emulsion. Positives can be produced from photocopies, laser printouts, acetates, drawings, paintings or black cut outs onto tru-grain or onto tracing paper. It is most important that you create a positive as a black and white image. The areas you wish you print must be dense black. Any grey areas on an image won't expose properly. To gain tones of grey there is a method called halftone when preparing an image on Adobe Photoshop.

Making a Photostencil

- Ensure that the screen is clean from any ink, old images and grease and that the screen is completely dry.
- To coat the screen, rest it against a wall or ask someone to hold it for you with the outside of the screen facing you. Position the trough at the bottom of the mesh – NOT on the frame and tilt slightly towards the screen to make sure the emulsion is in contact with the mesh. Glide the trough to the top of the mesh, pause and tilt the trough back to contain the emulsion. Use the trough from bottom to top of the mesh again to remove any excess emulsion. Pour any excess emulsion back into the tub, wash the trough with a sponge and water and wear gloves when cleaning it.



- Leave the screen to dry in a warm dark place for 20 - 30 minutes.
- When the emulsion is dry take it over to the UV exposure unit. Place your positive **FACE UP** on the glass top and then carefully place the screen on top with the emulsion layer in direct contact with the positive.
- Place the cover over the screen, set to correct exposure times (refer to the chart on the wall or ask a member of staff if you're unsure), press start.
- Once the exposure has finished remove the screen and wash it in the washout booth with water on both sides. You should see the image slowly being revealed on the screen.
- Leave the screen to dry.

Preparing to Print

- When your screen is dry use brown parcel tape to tape over any gaps in the emulsion on the screen. If you have two images on one screen you can tape over the one you don't want to print.
- The inks used in paper screen printing are system 3 acrylics mixed with printing medium. The ratio is 1 part acrylic mixed with 2 parts medium. The medium stops the acrylic drying in the screen. Before you start printing make sure you have enough ink mixed for the number of prints you wish to make.
- Clamp the screen into the frame of the print table and make sure there is a hinged registration sheet (tru-grain) attached underneath your image

Printing

- Using a spatula place the ink in a line above your image
- Choose a squeegee that covers the whole image
- Hold the squeegee at about a 45 degree angle and drag all the ink down the screen across the whole image. Your first print will be onto the registration sheet
- Lift the screen slightly and flood the ink back over the screen which prepares the screen for the next print
- Slide your paper under the registration sheet and mark with masking tape where the paper will go. Push the registration sheet to one side and then continue printing

Cleaning the Screen

- When you've finished printing scrape any remaining ink off the screen. Any leftover ink can be used again
- Unclamp and remove the screen
- Thoroughly clean screen with water and little washing up liquid in the washout booth and remove any tape
- Place screen aside to dry
- Make sure all squeegees and spatulas are cleaned too

Further Reading/Useful Resources

There are many artists and designers who use screen print processes and the type of work can vary greatly. These may be a starting point for some inspiration:

<https://www.mikeperrystudio.com/prints> - Bold & graphic multi-layered prints

<https://corita.org> - Sister Corita Kent, a screen printing nun. Political Pop Art of the 1960s

Books -

Screenprinting: The Ultimate Studio Guide from Sketchbook to Squeegee by Print Club London

Reinventing Screen Printing by Casper Williamson

<https://handprinted.co.uk> - Supplier of inks & screen printing equipment

Suggested Courses

Leeds Print Workshop runs a 5 week Introduction to Screen Printing course which covers the basics of screen printing and will allow further exploration and combinations of techniques.

Our annual membership will also allow access to use our facilities should you wish to explore the process in more depth.