



Amy Hutchings

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NAME OF EVENT: June Blooms Drypoint printing

DATE OF EVENT: 1-2pm, Monday 19th June 2023

June Blooms Drypoint – printing from a flower still life

Join Amy, pick up your recycling, and create something unexpected! Tetrapak enables the artist to cut, score, peel and print, creating unique artworks from recycling waste. Using a juice, milk, soup or custard carton, you can play with the process of drypoint - a fine art intaglio print technique - using low cost, immediate materials. The idea is to scratch a drawing into the silver-side of the tetrapak, apply ink, clean the ink so that it just stays in the areas you have scratched and then print. (You will need to work within the confines of your paper size, so the tetrapak will have to be cut smaller than your design).

Put on your old clothes/ apron/ gloves, find a clean surface to work on, or place newspaper on a surface to protect it.

You will need:

- A cleaned, flattened tetra pak
- Something to draw from life (like flowers)/ a drawing/ image/ photograph as inspiration to work from
- Scissors
- Metal skewer/ etching needle/ sharpened nail – anything sharp to scratch the tetrapak surface/ draw with.
- Blue tak (to create a handle, around the skewer, so you can hold it like a pencil)
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Tea towel/ nonslip rubber mat (to stop your tetrapak slipping when printing)
- Clean old towel/ newspaper or newsprint (for blotting the soaked paper)

- Cartridge paper/ 80g printer paper or similar work well, or anything about 45gsm such as mesa paper or other thin-ish Japanese paper. (The usual 300gsm print paper is not sensitive enough when printing by hand.)
- Tub of water, big enough to soak your chosen paper in (I'll be using a takeaway container or my washing up bowl!) or you could spray the paper with water before printing. Blot with newspaper if too wet
- Block ink (recommended) – I will be using block ink, but you could experiment with oil paints. You will need to spread the oil paint onto newspaper to absorb excess oil before printing, so it becomes thicker/ paste-like in consistency.
- Old credit/ store card or small piece of mount board (credit card sized) – to apply ink to the tetrapak plate surface
- Plastic netting (from fruit/ veg), or scrim/ old cloth – to remove ink from the plate
- Recycled tissue (from packaging) – to wipe the plate a little cleaner
- Tablespoon (for applying pressure when printing)

How To:

- Using your inspiration or chosen image, trace your design using a pencil onto the tracing paper.
- Open up and clean your tetrapak, if you haven't already, and cut to slightly larger than your artwork. This will become your printing plate. Trace the design onto the silver/ coated inside of the tetrapak.
- Now prepare your paper – cut your paper slightly larger than your design, leaving a border space around the intended print area. Place the paper in a tub of water to soak.
- Now take your skewer, attach the blutack part way down it's length, creating a comfortable grip.
- Begin drawing your design onto the tetrapak, scratching the foil coated surface with your skewer, revealing the card underneath. Continue until your design is transferred.
- Take your ink and using a piece of stiff card or old credit card, scrape the ink over your design, making sure to cover it all and pushing ink into the cuts you've made.
- Take a piece of scrim or vegetable net and, using circular motions, begin removing the ink from the flat surfaces of your design. Don't push too hard, so as to leave ink in the grooves.
- Once the smooth surfaces of your design are looking pretty clean, change from scrim to tissue paper. Using flat finger tips, rub gently to clean any surface ink left off of the smooth areas of your design. Pay particular

attention to the edges of grooves you've created, cleaning around them to produce a crisp line.

Printing:

Once you are happy with your plate, take the paper out of the water and gently lie it onto newsprint/ newspaper or a clean towel. Put another piece of paper on the top or carefully fold the towel (so that your print paper is still flat) and blot the paper. It should be mat looking, with no shiny areas. Once it is blotted, get your print area set up.

To print the plate, create a sandwich:

First layer – your non-slip mat or an old tea towel. This will stop the plate from moving.

Second – lie your tetrapak, ink side facing up, on top of the non-slip mat.

Third – lie your print paper carefully over the inked plate.

Forth – a layer of newsprint or newspaper.

Now holding the layers very still, use the back of a tablespoon or wooden spoon to exert pressure. Holding everything very, very still with one hand, apply pressure. I usually work in small circles. Pay attention to where you are working and move slowly across the whole of the plate, right to and over the very edges of your plate. I find it easier to apply pressure if I am standing, but if you are more comfortable sat you can still achieve great results. If you are on a chair that enable you to rise higher to your working surface, this might help you apply greater pressure.

Take your time with printing. It can be hard work, but go slow and steady, making sure nothing moves.

The Reveal!

If you aren't sure whether you've pressed hard enough, you can hold most of the print still with one hand and carefully lift the corner, ensuring nothing else moves. This will give you an indication of how much ink you have lifted. If you are happy, carefully continue to lift until you reveal your print! Taa Daa!!!!

Don't be disheartened if this is your first try and it's blurry/ too light/ not printed evenly. You have created a drypoint and this is now a technique that

you can continue to play with and make your own! You have elevated a lowly tetrapak carton to the high heights of professional printmaker materials!

Problem solving:

If it's blurry: your print has moved. This can happen when you are using your spoon to apply pressure and it shifts under your exertions. Don't be disheartened. Just ink up and go again.

If it's too light: there may not have been enough ink on the plate, or you might have cleaned too much off when removing excess ink. It may also be that you have not used enough pressure, or not applied pressure for long enough when printing to lift the ink. Just ink up and try again!

Drypoint takes patience and is the sort of technique where you get a 'feel' for how much ink is the right amount. You also will find the way of applying pressure that works best for you and the mark-making that you prefer and suits your purpose. Keep playing and enjoy the process, experimenting with the inks/ colours/ mark-making etc. The most important thing is not to be too precious and make sure to have fun!