

Drawing into Printmaking

10-Week Non-Toxic Printmaking Course

Duration: 10 weeks

Session length: 3 hours per week

Level: Beginner to intermediate

Approach: Drawing-led, experimental and process-based

Course Description

Drawing into Printmaking is a 10-week practical course exploring how drawings can be transformed, interpreted and developed through printmaking. The course encourages students to think of drawing not simply as preparation for a print, but as a fundamental part of the printmaking process.

Through a series of accessible, non-toxic printmaking techniques, students will investigate line, mark, tone, texture, repetition, reversal, layering and composition. Drawing exercises will provide the starting point for developing prints, allowing students to discover how an image changes as it moves from paper to plate, block and print.

The course introduces a range of processes including **monoprint, drypoint, relief printing and linocut**, alongside experimental approaches to mark-making and image development. Students will work with water-based and other non-toxic materials wherever possible, learning safe studio practices throughout.

The emphasis is on experimentation, observation and developing an individual visual language rather than producing technically perfect prints. By the end of the course, students will have created a body of prints and developed a personal approach to translating their drawings into print.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Develop drawings specifically for printmaking**, considering line, mark, tone, texture, scale and composition.
2. **Understand the fundamental principles of printmaking**, including the relationship between layout, ink, paper and printed image.
3. **Use a range of non-toxic printmaking techniques** safely and confidently.
4. **Translate drawn marks into different print processes**, understanding how each technique affects the final image.
5. **Experiment with reversal, repetition, layering and variation** to develop a drawing beyond a single original image.
6. **Explore positive and negative space** and understand their importance in relief and intaglio-inspired processes.

7. **Prepare and print simple editions**, while also recognising the creative potential of unique and variable prints.
 8. **Evaluate and refine their work**, using test prints to make informed decisions about subsequent prints.
 9. **Combine drawing and printmaking processes experimentally** to develop more complex imagery and surfaces.
 10. **Develop a small body of resolved prints** demonstrating experimentation, technical understanding and an emerging personal visual language.
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Weekly Course Structure

Week 1 — Drawing as the Starting Point

Focus: From drawing to print

Students begin by exploring how different types of drawing can generate printable marks. Exercises investigate continuous line, broken line, pressure, texture, hatching and tonal marks.

Practical activities:

- Drawing exercises using varied tools and pressures
- Looking at artists who use drawing and printmaking together
- Introduction to non-toxic printmaking materials and studio safety
- Creating a collection of marks and textures
- Developing a simple drawing suitable for translation into print
- Introduction to registration and printing terminology

Outcome: A series of experimental drawings and a selection of marks to carry forward into print.

Week 2 — Monoprint: Drawing Directly into Print

Focus: Immediate, one-off prints

Monoprint provides an accessible introduction to the relationship between drawing, ink and paper. Students draw directly into an inked surface and discover how pressure, wiping and mark-making influence the printed image.

Practical activities:

- Inking a plate
- Drawing, wiping and removing ink
- Creating positive and negative marks

- Making ghost prints
- Working with transparent and opaque layers
- Developing a small series from one drawing

Outcome: A collection of experimental monoprints exploring line, tone and texture.

Week 3 — Monoprint: Developing Layers and Composition

Focus: Building an image through repeated printing

Students develop their initial monoprints by introducing layers, colour and changes in scale. The emphasis is on discovering how an image can evolve through repetition and chance.

Practical activities:

- Layering monoprints
- Registration exercises
- Working with limited colour palettes
- Combining drawn and wiped marks
- Developing imagery from previous drawings
- Creating variations rather than identical prints

Outcome: A small series of layered monoprints demonstrating intentional and experimental decision-making.

Week 4 — Drypoint: Drawing into a Plate

Focus: Direct drawing and expressive line

Students are introduced to drypoint as a direct drawing process, creating a plate by scratching into a suitable surface. The process allows students to explore expressive line, burr and tonal possibilities.

Practical activities:

- Preparing a non-toxic drypoint plate
- Transferring or developing a drawing
- Drawing directly into the plate
- Understanding reversed imagery
- Inking and wiping the plate
- Producing first test prints

Outcome: A set of drypoint test prints exploring expressive drawn line.

Week 5 — Drypoint: Tone, Texture and Refinement

Focus: Taking a drawing further

Students use their drypoint plates to investigate tonal contrasts, texture and composition. Test prints become a tool for editing and developing the original drawing.

Practical activities:

- Comparing different inking and wiping approaches
- Creating tone through mark-making
- Exploring plate texture
- Making controlled changes to the plate
- Printing on different papers
- Developing a resolved drypoint image

Outcome: A more developed drypoint print or small edition demonstrating control of line and tone.

Week 6 — Relief Printmaking: From Drawing to Block

Focus: Drawing through positive and negative space

Students explore relief printing using a non-toxic, water-based approach. A drawing is translated into a block, introducing the idea that the areas left behind create the printed image.

Practical activities:

- Introduction to safe cutting techniques
- Preparing a lino or suitable relief block
- Translating a drawing into positive and negative shapes
- Understanding reversed imagery
- Inking the block
- Hand printing and/or using an appropriate press

Outcome: A relief block and a series of exploratory prints.

Week 7 — Linocut: Line, Shape and Texture

Focus: Developing a drawn language through carving

Students investigate how the qualities of a drawing can be retained, simplified or transformed through linocut.

Practical activities:

- Exploring different cutting tools and marks
- Creating texture and directional marks
- Developing contrast
- Testing different papers and ink applications
- Refining the relationship between drawing and carved image
- Producing a small edition

Outcome: A resolved linocut based on an original drawing.

Week 8 — Reduction, Layering and Colour

Focus: Building a print through successive layers

Students explore how a single block can be used to create multiple layers. The process encourages careful planning while allowing drawing to remain visible within the structure of the print.

Practical activities:

- Planning a multi-layer print
- Limited-colour approaches
- Registration
- Reduction printing
- Exploring transparent and opaque layers
- Responding to unexpected results

Outcome: A multi-layer relief print demonstrating an understanding of colour, registration and sequential printing.

Week 9 — Combining Processes: Drawing and Print

Focus: Developing an individual approach

Students select and combine techniques introduced during the course. The emphasis is on using printmaking processes as extensions of drawing rather than treating them as separate techniques.

Possible combinations:

- Monoprint with drypoint

- Drypoint with relief print
- Linocut with monoprint
- Printed textures combined with drawn marks
- Layered prints using different matrices

Students begin developing a final body of work around an image, theme or visual idea.

Outcome: Experimental proofs and a plan for a final print or small series.

Week 10 — Final Print and Review

Focus: Resolution, presentation and reflection

The final session allows students to consolidate their learning and produce a resolved print or small series. The session concludes with a group review and discussion of individual approaches.

Practical activities:

- Completing final prints
- Editing and selecting work
- Editioning where appropriate
- Exploring presentation and sequencing
- Group discussion and constructive feedback
- Reflecting on the development from drawing to print

Outcome: A finished body of work demonstrating the student's development across the course.