

Akua Kolor Monotype Printmaking Instructions

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SHAKE THE BOTTLE OF AKUA KOLOR BEFORE EACH USE

Akua Kolor is professional quality water-based ink specifically formulated for the monotype printmaking process. It is made of the highest quality, lightfast pigments and binders. No chalk, fillers, dryers or polymers are added. Pigments settle to the bottom of the bottle because there are no suspending agents added. This character is a sign of purity in Akua Kolor and is what makes Akua Kolor so uniquely radiant in color.

The very heavy earth colors contain a stainless steel mixing ball in the bottle to aid in the mixing process. To insure pigment dispersion, shake the bottle for at least one minute after hearing the mixing ball rattle.

The Additive or Direct Monotype Method (Working from a Light Field)

Akua Kolor is ready to use straight from the bottle. The liquid formula is great for all types of monotype processes. It is wonderfully brushable for additive monotype methods using all types of artist paint brushes and dip pens. Akua Kolor comes ready to use. Just fill the brush, pen or new Akua Kolor Flow Needle Applicators and begin drawing on your plate.

Steps:

1. Shake bottle of Akua Kolor.
2. Select colors and arrange palette or fill applicators.
3. Apply Akua Kolor onto the monotype plate.
4. Check the plate for puddles of Akua Kolor that may squeeze out during the printing process.
5. If puddles are seen, blot them gently with tissue paper.
6. Print on dry paper when using a press or on dampened paper when printing by hand pressure.

The Subtractive or Reductive Monotype Method (Working from a Dark Field)

Another method for creating monotypes, referred to as the subtractive or reductive method, involves rolling the ink onto the surface of the plastic plate. The image is created by drawing into the inky surface and removing ink from the plate. Cotton swabs, rags, sponges, etc. make great tools for removing the ink and creating the image. Akua Kolor rolls onto the plate beautifully, producing thin, even, transparent layers of color that are ideal for printing multi-registered plates. Plus printing on dry paper allows for easy registration.

Rolling Up

Roll Akua Kolor directly onto the surface of the plate. There is no need to roll up on a separate slab and transfer the ink. It is best to roll out a small amount of ink and then add a little more, slowly building up the ink on the plate. If too much ink is added all at once, your brayer will slip, slide and will not be able to roll.

Steps:

1. Shake bottle of Akua Kolor.
2. Squeeze 3 to 8 drops (depending on the size of the plate) of Akua Kolor on to the center of a monotype plate.
3. Add Retarder (Example: 3 drops Retarder to 8 drops Akua Kolor).
4. Spread the ink out evenly over the surface of the monotype plate using a soft brayer.
5. Add 3-8 more drops of Akua Kolor (no additional Retarder is needed) to the inked plate and roll out again.
6. Examine your plate. If the ink on your plate looks too transparent, repeat step 5 until you achieve the desired density of color. Note: If your roller is picking up the color rather than putting it down, there is too much ink on the surface of the plate. Remove some of the ink, or wait a few minutes for it to air dry.

7. Draw into the inked surface of the monotype plate by removing the Akua Kolor using cotton swabs, tissue paper, rags, sponges, etc.

8. Print on dry paper.

Beading

Sometimes beading occurs due to a change in chemistry. If beading occurs when rolling up, add a drop of any liquid dish detergent to the ink. This should stop the beading.

When painting with a brush, lightly coat your paint brush with the liquid dish detergent then paint over the beaded area.

Printing on Dry or Damp Paper

Akua Kolor prints beautifully on dry paper as long as the ink remains wet on the plate and printing is done on a press. We recommend dampening the paper when printing by hand or when drypoint or collograph plates are used. To dampen papers that have already been printed, lightly spray the back of the paper and wrap in a plastic bag.

To dry Akua Kolor on the plate, use a hair dryer or leave out in the sun. Dried Akua Kolor will release easily onto dampened paper during the printing process.

Clean Up

Most of the time cleaning plates and counter tops with a damp rag is all that may be required. A small brush is often helpful for cleaning brayers. Some intense colors may stain plastic surfaces over time. Use a mild dish detergent or Bon Ami cleanser for cleaning stains from plastic plates and counter tops. Bon Ami will not scratch plastic surfaces and does not contain chlorine bleach.

AKUA KOLOR MODIFIERS

FOR BEST RESULTS, APPLY AKUA KOLOR TO THE PLATE AWAY FROM COLD DRAFTS, SUNNY WINDOWS, HEATERS AND AIR CONDITIONERS.

Retarder

Adding Retarder to Akua Kolor slows the drying rate, giving you hours to work on reductive monotype plates. Retarder also helps release Akua Kolor from the plate to dry paper during the printing process.

How much Retarder should be added? It is important to determine the correct amount of Retarder to use for your particular technical style as well as the humidity conditions in your shop. The amount of Retarder needed may vary from printmaker to printmaker, shop to shop and season to season. You will need to determine the amount by trial and error.

Guidelines for adding Retarder:

- If you roll up a plate with Akua Kolor for the reductive monotype method and it feels too stiff to lift easily with a cotton swab, more Retarder should be added.
- If Akua Kolor is not releasing as well as you wish from the plate on to dry paper during the printing process, more Retarder should be added.

Note: Too much Retarder may cause the ink to bead on the plate. Also, if dark colors on the finished print are drying hazy, use less Retarder.

Blending Medium (originally call Thinner)

Akua Kolor Blending Medium also slows the drying rate of Akua Kolor. It is less tacky than the Retarder, giving you a more fluid medium for blending color and for creating washes.

To use: Dip a clean brush into the Blending Medium and apply next to the color on the plate, then simply blend.

Blending Medium can also be added to ink to create a more translucent color.

Tack Thickener

This unique modifier adds more tack and thickens Akua Kolor instantly. It is used in relief printmaking processes for rolling up heavier applications of Akua Kolor onto monotype plates, linoleum and wood blocks. Color will become deeper, more intense.

To use: Place desired amount of Akua Kolor onto a glass surface. Add up to 50% Tack Thickener and mix with a palette knife until stiff.

It is best to use printmaking papers that are absorbent. Magnani Pescaia, Fabriano, Tiepolo, Fabriano Rosasapina and a wide variety of Oriental papers are excellent choices.

Note: Akua Kolor with Tack Thickener may take a long time to dry when printed on coated or bond papers.

Extender

Akua Kolor will stiffen naturally to the same consistency as tube watercolors when left on an uncovered tray over a period of time. Referred to as “air thickening,” this procedure will thicken Akua Kolor without adding tack. This process may be desirable for heavier ink applications for **additive or reductive** monotype processes, linoleum or wood blocks.

To air-thicken Akua Kolor, add colors to a watercolor tray or jar and let sit. This may take a few hours, days or weeks depending upon the amount left out in the tray or jar. Akua Kolor will stiffen evenly without skinning. When the desired consistency is reached, cover with a lid and save.

Extender may be added directly to colors that have become too thick, restoring them to the original consistency.

Note: Air-thickened Akua Kolor will dry more quickly on the plate. Retarder may be added to delay the ink from drying too quickly. Dampening the printing paper may also be necessary for printing with these drier inks.



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TROUBLE SHOOTING

Ink is not releasing from plate to dry paper

- Apply more pressure
- Try different papers
- Add Retarder

Ink rolled on to the plate feels too stiff

- Add Retarder to the ink

Colors on finished prints dry hazy

- Add less Retarder or Extender

Color beads-up on plate

- Degrease plate with vinegar and baking soda
- Add less Retarder or Extender
- Add a drop of liquid dish detergent to ink
- Apply thin coat of liquid dish detergent to brush

Rubber Brayer is sliding when rolling-up

- Add less ink to the plate

Ink is too thin for roll-up

- Add Tack Thickener
- Air Thicken
- Select color with more intense transparency rating
- Use Foam Brayer

Ink is too thin for brushing

- Air Thicken

Puddling of ink occurs at start of lines with Needle Applicator

- When the needle is first placed on the plate, a small bead of ink may run off the tip. Before placing the tip on the plate, wipe the bead of ink off by running the tip over a stiff piece of paper