

# Inks, Modifiers, and Processes

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*Read labels carefully to make sure you are using the correct ink. Is it an etching, relief or lithographic ink?*

We have several types of ink in the studio, each designed for a specific process: Each of the black inks is specially formulated for a specific process, whereas the color inks are divided between intaglio/relief, and another set for litho and monotype, and a variety of black inks. Because of this, the black inks can be used straight from the containers, but the color inks often need to be modified for the correct consistency.

## Interrelated Ink Properties

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**Body:** This is the stiffness or viscosity of the ink. Does it stand up like putty or flow like honey?

**Length:** This can be judged by putting an ink knife in the ink and then drawing the knife straight up. The stream or thread of ink will indicate the whether the ink is long or short.

**Tack:** This is how sticky the ink is.

## Modifiers

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**Magnesium carbonate:** A white powder that adds body and stiffens the ink while also reducing length.

**Varnishes:** #00, #1 Greatly reduces body, tack and length, increases greasiness.

#3: Reduces tack but retains some length, increases greasiness, gives a light body.

#7-8: Increases tack, and length, and is needed in litho to help hold the pigments in the ink.

**Setswell/Sureset:** Reduces body, length and tack. Slows drying slightly, and produces a matte finish to inks when dry.

**Easy Wipe:** Reduces length, tack, and body. Add to color inks for intaglio if needed.

## Relief Printing

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Ink Properties: Medium body, medium length, light tack. Your ink should relax fairly easily into a pool after mixing.

**Black:** Gamblin PDX Black.

**Color:** Handschy Etching Inks + #1 Litho Varnish. A touch of Setswell or Sureset is also needed to reduce tack.

## Intaglio

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Ink Properties: Ink should be quite short, with little body and tack. If your ink is too long or tacky it will be difficult to wipe and leave very noticeable plate tone.

**Black:** Gamblin PDX Black or Bone Black.

**Color:** Handschy Intaglio Ink + small amount of Easy Wipe. #00 or #1 will also help, and may be needed in addition to a small amount of easy wipe.

## Lithography: Stone and Plates

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Ink Properties: Heavy, stiff body, moderate length. The pile of ink should hold its shape, or relax very slowly on slab.

**Black:** Graphic Chemical Crayon Black, 1796 Black,

**Color:** Handschy Color Litho Ink + Magnesium Carbonate as needed. Add #7-8 Varnish to Magenta, Rubine Red, Process Cyan or if the color 'bleeds' from the ink. For flats, ink should have less body and tack. If needed add a touch of Setswell or #1 when printing flats.

## Polyester Plate Litho

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**Black:** 50% Graphic Chemical Lithographic Black #1796 + 50% Crayon Black.

**Color:** Do not modify as stiff or as tacky as for plates or stones.

## Monotype

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*Take out only small amounts of ink!*

Any Ink will work fine. I usually use color litho inks, and etching black. You will need to add a fair bit of #00 varnish and a touch of setswell to make the ink soft and pliable to easily paint with.

**Black:** Etching or relief black.

**Color:** Handschy Color Litho Ink + #0000 Varnish, and Setswell or Sureset.