

Rob Mills Printmaker

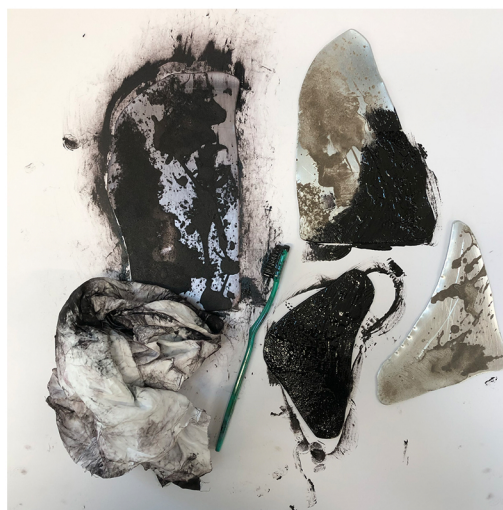
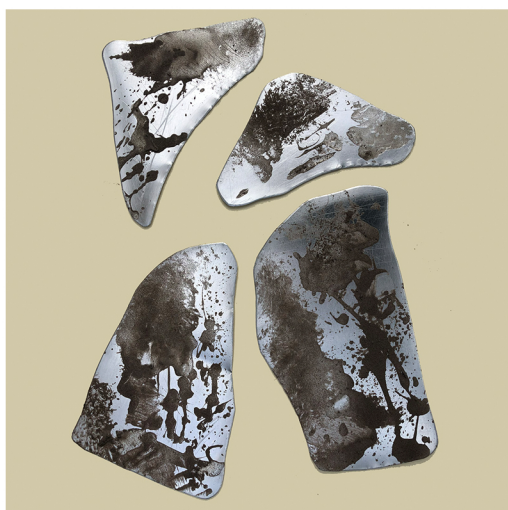


CARBORUNDUM BINDER TEST

When making my carborundum plates I usually use **Cranfield Acrylic Copolymer Emulsion** as the binder (glue) and this is also what Ross Loveday uses when teaching his carborundum masterclass at Curwen Print Study Centre. As technician for these workshops, a question I often get asked is: "what other products can be used" and/or "isn't the Cranfield a bit expensive"? I was unsure of what else would work, or the relative cost, so I decided to find alternative products that were readily available from my local art/DIY stores and put them to the test.

PRODUCTS TESTED

- **Evo-Stik Waterproof PVA**
- **Pēbēo Studio Acrylics - Bindex BRILLIANT (Acrylic Binder)**
- **Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Mediums - Gloss Medium**
- **Liquitex Professional Acrylic Mediums - Matte Varnish**



METHOD

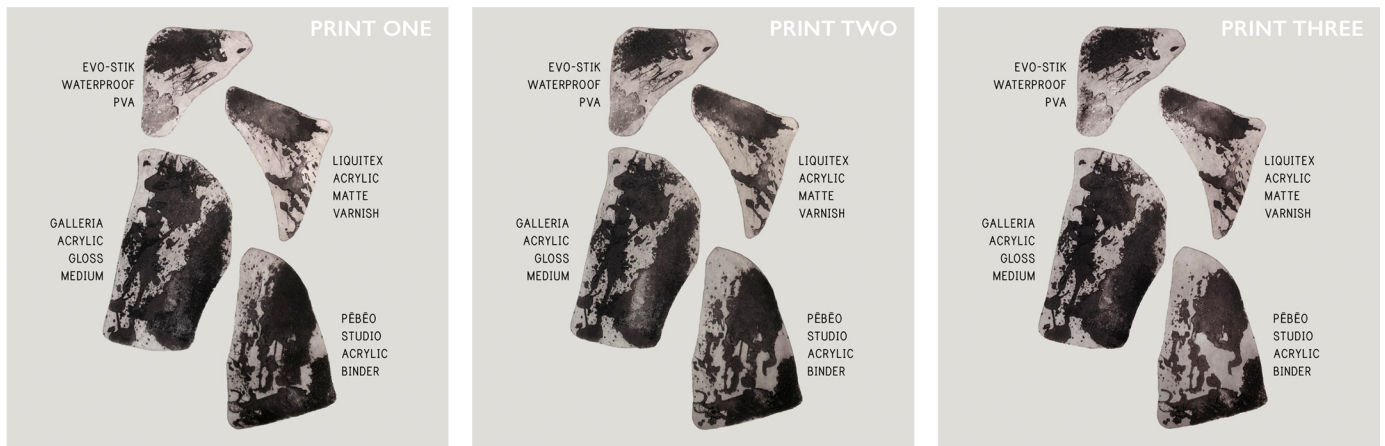
For the plates I prepared offcuts of 1mm aluminium and degreased them with Delphis Eco Kitchen Cleaner & Degreaser. I then applied the binders - in each case I dabbed some onto the plate with a brush and splattered more over the surface before stippling certain areas with a pot brush. Next, I blew a small amount of carborundum (a mix of fine and medium grades) over the binder to achieve a light/speckled coating then randomly sprinkled heavier amounts over the plate. I left the plates to dry overnight at room temperature, then a few days later inked them up with Hawthorn Stay Open Ink (warm black) and printed them on Curwen's Rochat etching press three times.

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TEST CRITERIA

I assessed how each binder poured/worked, how long it took to dry, it's adhesion and how it stood up to repeated wiping and printing. Also, I compared the cost of each to **Cranfield** (£37.65 per litre).



RESULTS

- **Evo-Stik Waterproof PVA**

£10.78 for 1 litre / £10.78 per litre

Very thick. Difficult to splatter but drizzled nicely. Spread ok but a bit gloopy. Initially sat thickly on the plate causing the stippling to dissapate but had noticeably flattened once dry, although it dried quickly. Inked and wiped ok. No degradation when repeatedly inked and printed.

- **Pēbēo Studio Acrylics - Bindex BRILLIANT** (Acrylic Binder)

£6.95 for 250ml / £27.80 per litre

Slightly thinner than PVA but still quite viscous. Splattered well, easy to spread and work. Initially sat a bit thicker on the plate than Cranfield, Galleria or Liquitex but flattened a bit while drying.

Was still wet after 5 hours at room temperature but fully dried overnight.

Inked, wiped and printed ok the first time but started to peel off with subsequent wiping.

- **Windsor & Newton Galleria Acrylic Mediums - Gloss Medium**

£15.99 for 250ml / £63.96 per litre

Like a thin PVA - a little viscous but reasonably free flowing. Splattered nicely, spread and worked well. Still wet after 5 hours drying at room temperature but fully dried overnight.

Inked, wiped and printed well.

- **Liquitex Professional Acrylic Mediums - Matte Varnish**

£15 for 237ml (£63.29 per litre)

Thinnest of all four, closest to Cranfield in viscosity and use. Splattered nicely, spread and worked well. Dry in 5 hours. Inked well and wiped more easily than the others - printed nicely.

CONCLUSION

Initially all four worked ok, although I found the PVA a bit too thick. (That said, if you want a cheap option the PVA works!) The **Pēbēo** was the only product that peeled of with repeated wiping so I wouldn't recommend it. Although a little pricey, my personal favourite is the **Liquitex** as it's the closest to Cranfield in feel and application but the **Galleria** also worked perfectly well.



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