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The material will not be the same for etching as for line engraving. The following list will provide you with some basic references so that you can make your first purchases with an easy mind. Don't hesitate to choose good quality tools, even for first use!



1. Intaglio printing press

The press is the essential tool for printing engravings.

The oldest presses, in cast iron, are very effective but their heavy weight means they are difficult to move. Steel presses are just as effective.

You need a considerable budget to purchase a press that will produce good quality prints.

You can contact a private or collective workshop to request access to a press.

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2. Tools for engraving

Tools are mainly used for direct engraving of the metal.

- **Drypoint:** a steel point that is more resilient than the metal to be engraved, which scratches the copper plate and embosses the metal. It is used like a feather. The line is characteristic, if you look through a magnifying glass, you will see the metal burr.
- **Burin:** a steel tool with a lozenge-shaped point that is very sharp and removes chips of metal. The resulting furrow makes it possible to create clear, accurate lines during inking, which is not the case with the drypoint.
- **Rocker:** the cutting edge of this tool is made up of tiny sharp points, making it possible to carry out prolonged work on the plate with back-and-forth movements, so as to obtain dead black during printing. It is mainly used in the mezzotint technique. (See basic knowledge : **Printmaking: Basic Concepts** [6])
- **Scraper:** this tool makes it possible to work on lights, greys and whites, as well as removing burrs cut by the burin.
- **Burnisher:** makes it possible to work on the values of your engraving with finesse, to correct carvings that are insufficiently deep, and even to remove these by firmly rubbing the surface of the plate.

Astuce : Make sure you have a good whetstone to maintain your tools.

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Good to know:

Varnish for etching

Varnishes are used in etching to protect the plate from biting. These varnishes have a bitumen and wax base that is diluted in oil. Varnishes of varying quality are available, and the type of varnish chosen will depend on what it is being used for. Make sure you have one or two flat synthetic brushes and some finer brushes to apply the varnish on the plate. Available varnishes:

- Liquid varnish to be applied with a brush.

- Soft and hard ball ground that is melted and applied with a cloth or roller.
- Covering varnish for white spaces.



3. The main mordants

- **Nitric acid:** This is a very strong mordant to be used diluted in a specific ventilated area. When the acid makes contact with the copper, it gradually develops a turquoise colour.

N.B: Make sure you pour the acid into the water during 50:50 dilution and not the other way round.

- **Ferric chloride:** this is a slower and more accurate mordant. It enables very reliable biting and you won't have any surprise results. Dark orange when it is new, it becomes black and opaque after use. It has the advantage of not producing toxic vapours.

N.B. this mordant leaves heavy stains. Protect your clothing!

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