



# NOBLE FINE ART

*Traditional Printers & Stationers*

## PRESS READY ARTWORK GUIDE

Letterpress printing can be time consuming and a little more demanding of both printer and designer than many other forms of printing. In return it literally adds another dimension to printwork, has the capacity for the most delicate detail, clean vibrant colour, and when combined with good design has no equal.

This is a short guide to designing and creating press ready artwork for letterpress printing and hot foiling.

We've tried to cover our most frequently asked questions along with a few hints and tips about getting the best from your design.

If you've still got any questions then give us a call, speak to one of our designers or printers, we're here to help you create.

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## *Design For Letterpress*

Designing for letterpress printing is very straightforward, the trick is to keep things simple whenever possible. Excellent quality card stocks, vibrant spot colours, and a three dimensional print needs only a sympathetic eye and hand of the designer.

### BOARD & PAPER

We print mostly on uncoated stock which means that the ink is printed directly onto the fibres of the material used to make the board or paper.

Soft compliant stocks, such as cotton, are renowned for superb print quality and feel in the hand, GF Smith's Colorplan range works well, as do other non-cotton stocks.

### INKS

Printing inks are translucent, which can be used to the designers advantage (see Overprinting), but it does mean that the colour of the print stock can show through and alter the printed colour of the ink.

Metallic inks have a dull sheen rather than being shiny, this is due to the use of uncoated stock and the pressure of the press. If you're looking for a shiny print then foiling would be our suggested option.

### COLOUR

Translucent inks means that colour accuracy is best on white and light coloured stocks. Darker more dense inks, such as metallics, are less affected by the stock colour. Printing a light ink on a dark stock does have an effect on colour, as an extreme example a white ink on a black board results in a grey printed result. We'd suggest you consider foiling in this instance.

We work and mix inks using the Pantone colour Matching System. Hint: choose your colours using the Uncoated PMS swatches only - screen colours will not be accurate to the printed result.

### TYPE

Legibility should be taken into account, letterpress is capable of resolving very small type. As a general rule however we recommend using type no smaller than 6pt. Letterpress handles type extremely well though care needs to be taken with some script style typefaces that may have very thin line widths at smaller type sizes. We recommend increasing the tracking to keep the type open at smaller sizes.

### LINE WIDTHS

Letterpress excels at printing intricate detail. We recommend a minimum line width of 0.25pt at the actual print size, slightly thicker for isolated lines at a minimum of 0.35pt, again at actual print size.

### SOLID COLOUR & TYPE

Large areas of colour require special attention when designing and printing letterpress. Solids can have a slightly mottled appearance, show little impression, and if especially large can lightly cockle/buckle the cardstock.

Combining solids and type, or reverses, in one pass through the press requires compromises in inking and set-up, which means that the solid area can appear more mottled. We often split solids and type of the same colour into separate press passes to ensure the best quality print possible.

### REVERSES

Where an area of solid colour is printed with a graphic, line or text, reversed out - not printed. Care needs to be taken with relative sizes, a small reverse on a large solid area can cause problems with the reverse filling in - especially in a longer print run.

### PHOTOGRAPHS / HALFTONES / SCREENS

Letterpress can be used to print tonal images using a halftone screen. This can be a creative and stylised use of letterpress but it's not a refined print, it has the look of an old style newspaper image.

If you want to use a halftone we work using screens at 50-100ppi and we'll typically clip the darker tones by 20% to reduce filling in with ink, and lighter tones similarly to ensure the tone forms on the plate. A halftone can be useful in creating a tint of the colour when used for shading for example.

### BLIND IMPRESSION / BLIND DEBOSS

Blind impression actually refers to using a single sided tool - the printing plate - blind, i.e., with no receiving half of the tool. Typically though it's used to describe an inkless impression where the pressure impresses the board creating a change in texture. This is a simple but very effective alternative to ink and used well can be a great feature in a design. We don't recommend using a blind deboss for small detailed items on coloured or dark board as the technique needs a shadow to show the relief.

### EMBOSSING

This requires a two part tool to be made, a male and female, the impression creates an inkless print which is raised above the surface of the board. A little care needs to be taken with the design of the embossed element and the weight of stock to be used, fine detail won't reproduce well on thicker stock.

### OVERPRINTING

A useful technique in creating the perception of additional colours is overprinting. This uses the translucent nature of the inks to create 3 colours from 2 passes through the press - in chosen areas the 2 colours are overlapped creating a 3rd. We use this technique a lot, with some care and pre-planning the combination of 2 colours, overprinting, and negative space can create a very special print.



## *Design For Foiling*

Foiling, like letterpress, requires compromises to obtain all-round good quality print. In some ways foiling is more inflexible and demanding of good technique from the designer and printer alike.

### BOARD & PAPER

We print mostly on uncoated stock which means that the foil is printed directly onto the fibres of the material used to make the board or paper.

Foiling works best on stock with a smooth surface, however cotton and other uncoated stocks work well too - GF Smith's Colorplan range is a good example.

### FOILS

Foils are opaque, which has considerable advantages when printing on darker colour stock with a lighter print colour, there's no change of the foil colour. There are two main types of foil, pigment and metallic.

Pigmented foils are a solid flat colour, sometimes available in different finishes, and don't release as cleanly as metallic foils - especially on small character sizes. Metallic foils are also available in different finishes, shiny and dull, they release easier and offer a powerful high light.

### COLOUR

The range of available foil colours is very limited compared to inks. We source from a range of suppliers, and offer a standard range of colours from stock.

### TYPE

Minimum sizes are a matter of print quality we're always looking for the optimum sharpness which means that type smaller than 8pt can pose a problem for a clean print, especially if the typeface has small counters. We try and avoid combining very small and very large type in a design as it compromises the optimum set-up, and print quality.

### LINE WIDTHS

Similar to letterpress we recommend a minimum line width of 0.25pt at the actual print size, slightly thicker for isolated lines at a minimum of 0.35pt, again at actual print size. Bridging between linework can be an issue if they are closely spaced, though we have great success foil printing line drawings.

### SOLID COLOUR & TYPE

Large plates and areas of colour can be more demanding to obtain a regular print.

Combining large areas of colour and type in one pass through the press requires compromises as each has particular requirements to foil well. We often split large areas of foil and type of the same colour into separate press passes to ensure the best quality print possible.

## *Approval & Print*

### APPROVAL

Once we have received your press ready artwork, we'll check your artwork and send a PDF proof with a confirmation of all your print details. We won't start our print process until we have your approval to go-ahead.

### LEAD TIME

Our normal lead time is 10-15 working days from receipt of client approval.

### QUESTIONS?

If you're unsure of how some of your design elements will work, or would like to talk with us about our processes, we'd be happy to take a look at your artwork and provide guidance where we can.



## *File Preparation*

### FILE TYPES

We prefer packaged Adobe InDesign and Illustrator layered files, we also accept Print Quality PDF's.

### ILLUSTRATOR & INDESIGN

If you are using either InDesign or Illustrator, your file should contain layers with your colours separated, and any other design elements such as perforations, creasing, die cutting, etc should be indicated on your layers.

Type should always be outlined and any Raster (non vector) images as 1200dpi embedded bitmap TIFF files. These should be 1200dpi at 100% of the required print size.

We require layered files to allow us to easily break your job apart and create a plate for each colour or process. It also provides an easy reference for you to view exactly how your file will print.

### SIZE & BLEED

Create your artwork at the required size and allow 3mm bleed if required.

### TRIM & REGISTRATION

We'll add any necessary trim & registration marks.

### DELIVERING YOUR FILE

Send your files by email (up to 10Mb) or yousendit, Dropbox etc. Please ensure your details, and any Noble reference are clearly shown.

### QUESTIONS?

If you're unsure of how to create your artwork or would like to talk with us about our processes, we'd be happy to discuss and help where we can.

## *Services We Offer*

### YOU DESIGN – WE PRINT

We offer a comprehensive and flexible print service for designers and graphic professionals. We specialise in short lead time, short run print and finishing.

Working from your press ready artwork and to your specification, we have a wealth of print experience at your disposal, ready to add value to your project or business. Please contact us with details of your project.

### WE DESIGN – WE PRINT

We offer a fully bespoke design and print service to meet your specific, design and print needs. Working from your brief we innovate and create; concept, design and print.

We're quick to get involved in a project brief and relish the challenge of something a little bit special, unusual or just plain awkward. Please contact us with details of your project.

### ORIGINAL ART

We use in our in house artists to create unique line drawings specifically for letterpress printing. Decades of experience in creating fine art shows in the quality of our line drawings.

### PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTING

We traditionally print photographic images using photogravure. Photogravure is easiest described as a kind of etching, where a photographic image is etched into a plate, inked by hand and printed on dampened paper using an etching press.

Photogravure prints are often pictorial, and have a gentle more soulful character which mark them out as something more than a photographic image. Portraiture is especially powerful when printed using photogravure.

Every print pulled is subtly different and so a singular piece of art, with care gravure prints will last for hundreds of years.

### OUR MAIN PRINT & FINISHING SERVICES

We offer complimentary design services and support for all of our print and finishing services. Please contact us with details of your project.

- Letterpress Printing
- Embossing
- Foil Blocking
- Foil Embossing
- Die Cutting - including Die Design
- Product Packaging
- Edge Painting / Foiling
- Corner Rounding
- Hole Drilling
- Perforating
- Creasing
- Duplex / Stock Laminating