

## Test Five: Using inks

This was not so much a "test day" as a real-life application of water-based inks for a personal book project. I used both Akua and Hawthorne inks, however, and made some noteworthy observations. I chose to use both inks because I wanted to try Akua's metallic silver on my text but I also wanted to print on vellum. Since Akua dries by absorption rather than evaporation, and vellum is non-porous, I used Hawthorne inks to print on this surface.

It is difficult to produce crisp text with metallic ink. It is best used mixed with another color, so I added white. Also, after the ink is applied, it must be rolled over with a release agent, in order to insure that the metallic ink will lift off the surface and transfer to the paper. The release agent is quite runny, so if too much is applied, it creates halos around the letters, especially if the printing paper is not very absorbent. Ultimately, I did achieve results that satisfied me, but it is important to note that my project does not require pristine printing. Because of the white, the ink consistency was initially too runny. Adding mag proved to work quite well in stiffening the ink and holding it on top of the type.

Because of the initially runnier consistency of the Akua, and because white is a stubborn color, I faced a formidable task during clean up, as a lot of ink had collected in the crevices of the 10-point font. The best and most efficient way to clean it, I discovered, was to apply dish soap to a dampened paint brush (soft bristles but sturdy enough not to bend immediately upon contact) and gently brush inside the crevices. I immediately followed through with a dry paper towel and blotted the type dry. The Hawthorne ink came up easily with a small amount of vegetable oil applied to a shop towel, followed by a small amount of EP-67 also on a shop towel, also immediately followed by thorough blotting/drying. In both cases, I removed most of the ink first by running newsprint through the press a few times and then wiping the type with a dry shop towel.

Because the Hawthorne ink was out for a longer period of time again, it was once again quite difficult to remove from the roller (I hand-rolled this type). Almost none wiped off with a dry towel, and even oil proved ineffective. The solution lay in Estisol 242. I dripped a small amount (about 1/2 teaspoon) onto the palette and rolled the brayer through it. The ink came off immediately. I then wiped it thoroughly with a shop towel and degreased with EP-67. Then I rinsed the whole roller in water to remove any residues and thoroughly dried it. The Estisol on the palette was sufficient for cleaning the remaining ink off the palette. Vegetable oil followed by EP-67 was effective on the palette knives.