



Akua™ Carborundum Gel FAQ's

1. What is Carborundum printing?

Carborundum printmaking is a collagraph process in which the image is created directly on the plate by applying an abrasive grit (Carborundum) mixed with an acrylic medium or glue. Once dried, it forms areas of texture or line which is then inked intaglio, relief or both. The plate is printed with an etching press in the same manner as other printmaking plates. Since the Carborundum mixture is built up on the plate, the paper embosses when going through the press, creating a rich velvety surface. The plates are strong and can be printed many times.

2. How is Carborundum printing done traditionally?

Printmakers have been experimenting with methods for making Carborundum prints for decades. Carborundum grit powder originally found its way into printshops as an abrasive for grinding litho stones. Inventive printmakers eventually found a new means for using this grit for constructing collagraph plates. By applying a mixture of Carborundum-powdered grit and glue, a surface is created which holds the ink when dry.

Traditionally, there are two basic ways printmakers have been producing Carborundum printmaking plates. Some printmakers apply it by painting the surface of the plate with glue, sprinkling the grit on top of the glue and shaking off the surplus. Other printmakers mix the grit with glue on a palette or in a jar and paint it directly on the plate.

There is no standard formulation for mixing ratios or and no specific type of glue is used. The Carborundum-powdered grit comes in several grades (fine, medium and coarse), and each offers slight textural differences. Basically, the more grit added to the glue, the darker the color. Printmakers are known to use PVA glue, Elmer's glue, wood glues, Acrylic mediums, shellac, or varnish as the binder.

3. How does Akua™ Carborundum Gel for Platemaking improve the process?

The Akua™ Carborundum Gel offers a reliable, ready-to-use product right from the jar. By using this tried and true printmaking medium, printing problems associated with improper mixing can be alleviated.

Akua™ Carborundum Gel uses an acrylic binder that withstands large amounts of press pressure and is water-resistant when printing on damp paper. Too often, when printmakers prepare their own mixtures, they use the wrong type of glue which may dissolve when printing on damp paper and cause areas of Carborundum to lift off the plate. Additionally, improper selections of binders may remain tacky and cause the paper to stick to the plate when going through the press. Akua™ Carborundum Gel offers a safer alternative to toxic binders such as shellac and varnish.

Akua™ Carborundum Gel offers new possibilities for creating Carborundum prints. It makes screen printing a Carborundum image onto a plate trouble-free as it is formulated with the perfect balance of fine grit particle size and the proper ratio of amount of binder to grit for squeegeeing through either silkscreen (110 monofilament) or plastic stencils.

4. How does Akua™ Carborundum Gel for Platemaking improve results?

Akua™ Carborundum Gel is performance tested, so printmakers can rely on the consistency and durability of this platemaking medium from start to finish. As a result, prints made with Akua Carborundum Gel will be rich and velvety, each and every time.

5. What Carborundum grit is used in the medium?

#220 grit is used.

6. How long does it take for the Carborundum Gel to dry*?

This can vary depending on climate and application. Consider the possibilities below:

- a) Thin application - at least one hour
- b) Medium application - at least two to three hours
- c) Thick application - at least one to two days, typically

** "Dry" plates should feel rough like sand paper to the touch, not smooth or soft.

7. What type of medium is the Carborundum Gel?

Carborundum gel is an acrylic medium.

8. Can I paint with it?

Yes, you can paint using the Akua™ Carborundum Gel.

9. How do I clean my Carborundum plate?

Gently wipe with a soft textured rag that is lightly dampened with water and liquid detergent. We recommend a micro-fiber rag.

10. Will the Carborundum Gel shred my tarlatan or Akua™ Wiping Fabric?

Because the grit in the gel is so fine, it will not shred or tear your Wiping Fabric if you wipe gently. Aggressive wiping may cause some slight shredding.

11. How do I ink my Carborundum Gel plates?

We recommend using a Speedball® Soft Rubber brayer to roll and press the ink onto/into your plate. This will allow less wear and tear on the plate surface, opposed to a traditional squeegee or inking card.

12. What kind of paper should I use to print my Carborundum Gel plates?

Any traditional printmaking paper can be used. Dampening time will vary depending on the paper.

13. My paper stuck to my plate when I printed it through an etching press.

How do I prevent this?

Consider the possibilities below:

- a) Paper was too damp
- b) Plate was not dry yet
- c) Too much pressure on etching press

14. My print looks washed out when dry. What happened?

Consider the possibilities below:

- a) Over-wiped plate
- b) Paper was too damp
- c) Too much modifier added to Akua™ Ink