

Fabric Printing with Caligo Safe Wash Relief & Block Inks



Caligo Safe Wash Inks are designed for printing on paper but a growing number of printmakers are using Safe Wash Inks on fabric with really lovely results.

To avoid disappointment and get the best from our inks, we do strongly advise you read our guide first and always thoroughly test on a sample piece before committing to a full project. Avoid fabric that may shrink on washing or pre-wash first and remember that the result is intended primarily as an art work and not for daily use and rewashing.



With thanks to Susie Hetherington

WHICH INKS SHOULD I USE?

We would recommend you use our Caligo Safe Wash Relief Inks on fabric as these have some driers already added. If you need to speed up drying times, then you can add a drop of cobalt or manganese driers to your ink and mix well. (Always follow the application instructions on your driers)

WILL MY FABRIC PRINT BE PERMANENT AND WILL IT BE WASHABLE?

We designed our inks so that while they are wet, you can wash them out with just soap and water, without the need for toxic solvents. Great for washing away the odd spot of ink on your hands or clothes, and even for recycling your used tarlatans. But the neat thing is, once your Safe Wash Inks have been given sufficient time to dry thoroughly and fully, they do show a good level resistance to handling and washing. Whilst we're not able to guarantee that your fabric print will be fully water resistant and 100% fast on all textiles and situations – we've seen some lovely print results and excellent wash results.



Some printers like to wash and dry their fabric first to give the most receptive surface for printing.

If the fabric has a rough, woven texture and you want a more solid ink coverage that reaches 'into the dips' - then you may need the help

of a mechanical press with higher pressures.

If you are hand-printing without a press and you want a denser prints then we recommend you choose smoother, less textured material. We've achieved good ink transfer by firmly hitting the back of the linocut with a wooden mallet! (As used in the traditional method of Hand Block Printing on Textiles)

Here are a few examples of some printing methods we have used:

Example 1 - Printed using a press

Fabric: Cotton

Ink: Caligo Safe Wash Relief Ink

Plate: Linocut

Printing Method: Etching Press. Ink the linocut in the normal way. Print as an etching.

You'll need to adjust the height of the gap between the roller and etching table to accommodate the linocut – try a few test prints to achieve the optimum pressure to give a strong, even print.



Don't forget to protect your blanket with a couple of sheets of tissue paper before you print. Hang printed fabric in a warm dry space with plenty of moving air. Gently rub test to check the image is dry. Iron on the reverse with a high setting (no steam) before the final wash test.

Fabric Printing with Caligo Safe Wash Relief & Block Inks (continued)

Example 2 - Hand Printed without a Press from Lino

Fabric: Cotton

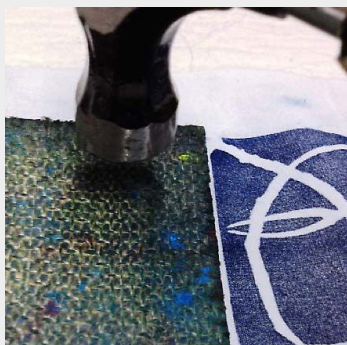
Ink: Caligo Safe Wash Relief Ink

Plate: Linocut

Printing Method: 'By hand', without a press

Work on a sturdy bench.
First layer – felt etching blanket. Second layer – sheet of tissue paper.
Third layer - fabric (print-side face up)

Place inked linocut ink-side down on to the fabric and apply pressure to the back of the linocut by a combination of a heavy rolling pin followed with sharp hits with a hammer or mallet. Hang printed fabric in a warm dry space with plenty of moving air. Gently rub test to check the image is dry. Iron on the reverse on a high setting before the final wash test.



Example 3 - Hand Printed without a Press from Polymer plate

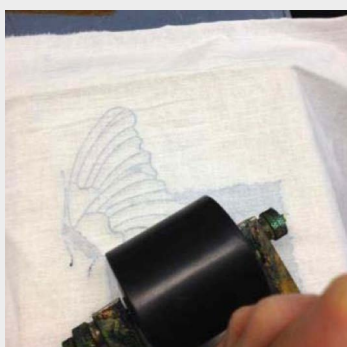
Fabric: Cotton

Ink: Caligo Safe Wash Relief Ink

Plate: Photopolymer Plate (Type High)

Printing Method: 'By hand', without a press

Ink the plate in the usual manner. For this 'type high' hard printing surface, we found the best way to print by hand to place the inked block ink-side up and then carefully lay the fabric over the inked block. Gently press the fabric onto the plate by hand. Then use a clean roller to apply firm pressure to transfer the inked image, making sure the fabric doesn't slip.



We don't recommend burnishing the traditional way (e.g. by rubbing with the back of the fabric with a spoon or bamboo barren) as it's difficult to prevent the fabric from moving and smudging the image.

Hang the printed fabric in a warm, dry place with plenty of moving air. Iron before washing.

We've also hand printed successfully (on a hard surface) with a simple 'traditional' Rubber Stamp.

DRYING AND WASHING

As our inks were made for printing on paper - they will take longer to dry than dedicated fabric inks. Once you've printed your image – you will need to wait for the ink to fully dry before handling, rubbing or attempting to wash the fabric for the first time.

As a guide, we would recommend letting your print dry for several days before handling, rubbing or washing for the first time. Some colours and fabric combinations may need longer (e.g. Naphthol Red) others

may need less time (e.g. Prussian Blue). You can use a hot iron (without the steam) to the reverse of the fabric to speed up drying before washing. You may see a slight colour shift in some colours at high temperature settings.

Different fabrics may need different drying times depending on whether the ink is fully embedded into the fibres of the fabric, simply sits on the surface (or a combination of the two). Pigmented ink are 'adsorbed' onto the fabric fibres rather than being 'absorbed' into the fibres as a fabric 'dye would be'

If you are intending to wear (e.g. a scarf) or handle the printed fabric (e.g. as a cushion) or it's likely to be exposed to the elements (e.g. a pennant or flag) - then we'd advise you wash the printed fabric before using. This way the washed fabric has the best chance to remain smudge resistant - even if you may lose a little colour on first wash.



Wash Test

Fabric: Cotton

Ink: Caligo Safe Wash Relief Ink

Plate: Linocut

Printing Method: Etching Press. Ink the linocut in the normal way. Print as an etching.

Drying time: 7 days - this will vary depending on the ink colour and drying conditions. If dryers are added the time will decrease.

Washing setting: 2hr wash at 40°C



BEFORE WASH

AFTER WASH

Fabric Printing with Caligo Safe Wash Relief & Block Inks (continued)

KEY POINTS

- Always test on a sample piece of fabric first before committing to a full project.
- Print with Caligo Safe Wash Relief Inks
- Avoid fabric that may shrink on washing or pre-wash before printing.
- Remember - Caligo Safe Wash Inks are oil-based and will take longer to dry than specialist fabric inks
- To speed up drying times, hang your printed fabric in a warm, dry space with plenty of moving air.
- For an even quicker dry - use a hot iron on the reverse side of your print (switch off steam setting)
- Wait until your fabric is fully dried before you handle or first wash.



With thanks to Susie Hetherington



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