

Acrylic bitumen rubber paint as a ground & stopout

Overview:

Gripset Betta bitumen rubber paint is a product used in industry as a waterproofing agent for roofs etc. As a stopout it is a preferable alternative to the turps based traditional bitumen paint. It is **not** classified as hazardous according to criteria of Worksafe Australia.

Similar acrylic waterproofing products are available in other countries. In Australia the product is marketed as Gripset bitumen rubber paint available at hardware stores.

There is no discernable odour when using the paint unlike the traditional counterpart and it is water mixable for ease of use. It can be applied as a ground (painted on with a soft brush) and also as a stop out. Water needs to be added so that it is not too thick - where it was very thick it resisted the etching needle and where too thin it was foul bitten. A little practice will determine the best thickness.

To remove soak in a bath of VCA - Vegetable Cleaning Agent – a safe solvent.

Altogether it is far more pleasant to use than bitumen paint, no discernable fumes, easier to apply and dries quickly with the help of a hairdryer or a minute or two on the hotplate.



“Blossom” Annie Day, etching on aluminium using Gripset Bitumen Rubber paint as a ground and stopout

Formula for aluminium etching bath Adapted from Nik Semenoff’s recipe

CuSO₄ (copper sulphate -- bluestone)..... 500g

NaCl (sodium chloride -- table salt)125g

NaHSO₄ (sodium bisulphate – Harpic Powder) 12g

H₂O (water)

Preparing the plate5 – 10 litres

- Mix dry ingredients in a large plastic container, store dry until needed.
- **Take 1 scant cup dry mixture and add to approx. 1 litre water.**

Aluminium or any other metal plate can be used. Depending on the thickness and condition of the plate first sand with wet and dry sandpaper and prepare edges. The recipe above is for aluminium plate. If you are etching copper or zinc use a safer etchant such as Edinburgh etch or Ferric Chloride

	Method
1	To degrease scrub the plate with a scouring pad, finish with a cream cleanser
2	Dry with a clean towel or a hairdryer
3	Cover the back of the plate with contact film to protect during etching
4	Keep fingers off the surface until the ground is brushed on



Ground painted on too thinly optimal thickness drawing with etching needle etching as usual

Bitumen rubber as a ground

Don't use the paint too thinly, see picture above left, a thin coat like this will foul bite. Conversely, a coat painted on too thickly may resist the etching needle. A little practice will determine the best thickness.

	Method
1	Use water to thin bitumen rubber paint down to a thin creamy consistency and brush two coats evenly all over with a soft brush. Dry between coats. See second picture above for optimal thickness.
2	Dry the plate on a hotplate for 1 or 2 minutes or dry with a hairdryer then apply an image with the etching needle.
3	The plate is now ready to be immersed in the etching bath.
4	After plate has been etched remove ground by soaking in a bath of VCA. Or with acetone
5	Thoroughly degrease using cream cleanser applied with a soft sponge rinse, dry.



VCA used to remove ground stopping out drying on hotplate etching further stopping out

Bitumen rubber as a stopout

For copper, zinc or steel apply a safer aquatint before stopping out. Expect perfect results without foul biting on aluminium but make sure each application is dried thoroughly before re-immersing in the etching bath

	Method
1	Apply the paint the same as regular stopout and dry thoroughly.
2	Immerse in the etching bath to etch - stopping out to gain various tones
3	After plate has been etched remove the ground by soaking in a bath of VCA or with acetone
4	Thoroughly degrease using cream cleanser applied with a soft sponge rinse, dry.
5	Sand edges smooth, ink and print.



Stopping out



final plate ready to ink



sanding the edges smooth



the print



Left: notice where the ground was thickly applied it resisted the etching needle. *Right:* final print

- VCA removes the paint perfectly. After removal rinse the VCA off the plate and degrease with cream cleanser on a soft sponge.
- Keeping a small amount of the paint in a jar may be the best way to use this product - if the lid is left off the tin it will dry out.
- Gripset Beta non-toxic Bitumen Rubber paint available from hardware stores

