

# James Green: An Introduction to Lino Cutting Printmaking

MuseumSheffield

James Green, printmaker, provides an introduction to Lino cutting.

Many thanks to Alan Silvester at Museums Sheffield, and to James Green, for sharing this resource.



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'Terns'

JG

## Introduction to Lino cutting

*(Transcript from the video)*

"Hi, my name is James Green. I'm an artist and printmaker, and I live in Sheffield. I discovered linocut printmaking about ten years ago. I found some tools and I decided to have a go at making some Christmas cards one year. I'd never done any

printmaking before that. As soon as I started using the lino I was immediately addicted. I absolutely loved it. Basically for the last ten years I've just been making prints.

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I like linocut because it's a very physical medium. I like the fact that you use tools. I use a spoon for rubbing the pictures. It's physical, - you know when you've been printing and when you've been creating things because your arms ache and I kind of like that physicality of it. I like the simplicity as well -- the fact that you can only use a limited amount of colours. I use, let's say, one or two colours with my prints. So you have to think about how things are going to work a lot before you actually create the picture. And you can't create things that are too complex. You have to be fairly simple with your images, because linocut doesn't lend itself very well to really, really detailed images.



Before I actually start on the linocut I think it's quite important to plan the image. For me, it's quite important to create a composition first that's going to work. If I was doing a landscape, say a Sheffield landscape, I would take some photographs. But I might move stuff around within the photograph before I actually started to make sure the composition worked. And then, once I'd done that, I would then transfer the image onto the lino.



## Making a Linocut

I work on a fairly small scale. Most of my pictures are not bigger than A4, maybe some A3. That's primarily dictated by the materials that I use and the lino that I use. It is really difficult to create a linocut that is really massive, especially trying to rub the picture with a back of a spoon as well. I think you'd be there for weeks if you did a giant linocut. But I quite like the fact, again, that the size and the scale of the image is dictated for me, so then I have to think about what is going to work within that scale.





Mixing the ink



Applying the ink



Placing the paper

I use quite small tools, which are specifically designed for lino cutting. They're like very small chisels basically, with either a U-shape or a V-shaped end. I use water based inks, and obviously I use the lino, and lino is made from compressed cork and linseed oil, with hessian on the back. It's basically the same lino that's been used since the start of the twentieth century. It hasn't really changed at all.

First of all I would transfer the image onto the lino from my sketches and my drawings, either using tracing paper or carbon paper. Then I would start cutting it with tools. And then eventually, once I'd finished the cutting, and I was happy with it, then I would roll some ink onto the lino, place some paper on top, really carefully. And then rub with the back of my spoon, to push the ink onto my paper from the lino, and then, eventually, I would peel it off. And hopefully have a good print at the end of that."



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'Donkey Collage #2'

JG

Donkey Collage by James Green





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'Starling'

JG

Starling by James Green

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