



TERMS

SCREEN PRINTING TERMS / JARGON

This guide will help you learn the basic terms and materials needed for screen printing.

1. ARTWORK.

This can be a picture, drawing, cartoon, or words you want to put on your printed piece. This is the starting point of screen printing. There are many different techniques for getting artwork transferred onto a mesh screen. Here at Cricket Press, we scan our artwork into a digital format, and then output the different elements (or color separations) to film using an ink-jet printer.

2. COLOR SEPARATIONS or "SEPS".

Once your art is created, each color layer must be printed on clear film called separations. These will be used to expose the images for each color into the screen(s).

3. THE SCREEN.

This is a frame, usually made of wood or aluminum, with a screen made of mesh material very tightly stretched over it. The screen acts as a "stencil" for passing ink through to the surface underneath.

4. MESH.

This is the material which is stretched over the silk screen frame itself. This mesh material, as its name suggests, has holes in it that can vary in size. The holes allow ink to flow through onto your printed piece. Different screens have different mesh counts. The lower the number, the more ink it allows through. Higher mesh counts can be used for images with greater detail.

5. EMULSION.

This is a liquid substance that when put into the screen, and dried in a dark room it blocks the mesh, preventing the ink flowing through onto your printed piece. In areas where the emulsion hardens (by exposure to bright light), the screen is blocked so no ink can pass through. This is imperative to ensure that nothing other than the image you intend to print appears on the final print. The emulsion is only light-sensitive once it has dried on the screen.

6. COAT THE SCREEN.

This simply means applying the liquid emulsion onto the screen before you begin to burn your artwork to the silkscreen. See number 5.

7. BURNING A SCREEN (EXPOSURE).

This is the process of using a bright light source to burn your artwork image to the silkscreen. In areas where the emulsion is kept soft (by your image blocking the light) and is eventually washed out of the screen, the ink will pass through to produce your print.

8. HALOGEN OR HIGH WATTAGE LIGHT BULB.

Very bright, or high wattage lights are needed to sufficiently expose the emulsion on the screen during the exposure process.

9. SQUEEGEE.

This is a tool with a flat rubber blade on one side used to pull ink evenly across the screen mesh.

10. RECLAIM

The reclaiming process involves removing the ink from the screen then spraying on stencil remover to remove all emulsion. This allows most screens to be used over and over for different designs. Stencil removers come in the form of liquids, gels, or powders.

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