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How to care for imagesetter random dot screens (RDS)

1. Keep the RDS safe, in a plastic pocket/sheet protector, or rolled with tissue paper in a clean cylinder, made of pvc or strong cardboard.

2. Try to handle the RDS with clean fingers, touching it only as necessary. Do not let the RDS bend or crease.

3. The RDS has a shiny side and a matte side. Place the matte side facing towards your photopolymer plate surface when exposing the plate. Shiny side up, matte side down, towards your plate.

4. You can use the RDS as a first exposure followed by your film positive/drawing/photograph or as a second exposure after your positive/drawing/photograph. There is only a slight difference in the printed image.

5. If you have used any drawing media to produce your image that stays tacky or wet, definitely use the RDS first, so that you do not get the RDS dirty.

6. If the RDS does get dirty you may carefully clean it. Test your cleaning solution of the edge of the film or on a trimmed piece if you have one.

7. If it's water-based media clean the area with water on a soft lint-free cloth. Let the moisture evaporate, allowing the surface to dry. Once totally dry, buff the film surface lightly with a dry soft lint-free cloth. Air dry completely before re-using.

8. Some media (texta pens) can be cleaned with methylated spirits or isopropyl alcohol. Wipe quickly with isopropyl alcohol to remove any greasy film let the solvent evaporate. Once the film surface is dry wipe with a dry soft lint-free cloth. If you don't have isopropyl alcohol use methylated spirits.

9. If it is oil-based media, try a solution of 50/50 water and white vinegar. Once you have cleaned the area let the surface dry and buff gently with a soft lint-free cloth. If the vinegar solution does not clean the film, try white spirits on a soft lint-free cloth.

10 If you are using a vacuum Ultra-Violet exposure unit that employs a diffusion film to draw down on your plate and film, you will need to trim your RDS so that it is a fraction smaller than your plate. If you have glass in your vacuum UV-exposure unit the RDS can be larger than the plate as the vacuum does not draw down on the RDS. I have diffusion film in my vacuum UV-exposure unit, which draws down around the edge of the photopolymer plate. I do have to ensure that my RDS is slightly smaller than my photopolymer plate.

11 If you are careful with your RDS you should have many years service from it. After use store it safely as soon as possible. Endeavour NOT to get the RDS dirty or creased.