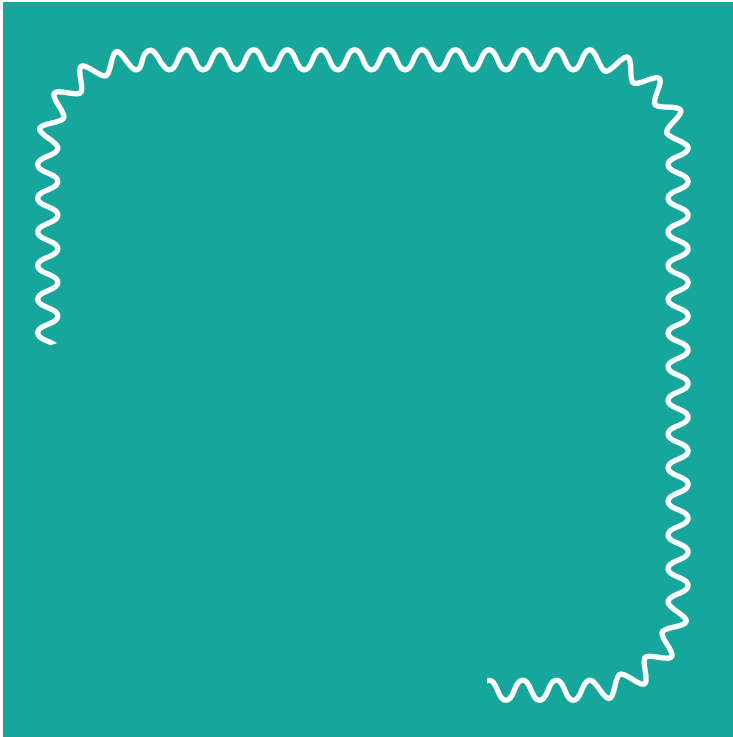


Alexander Jean Edvard
Le Sage de Fontenay

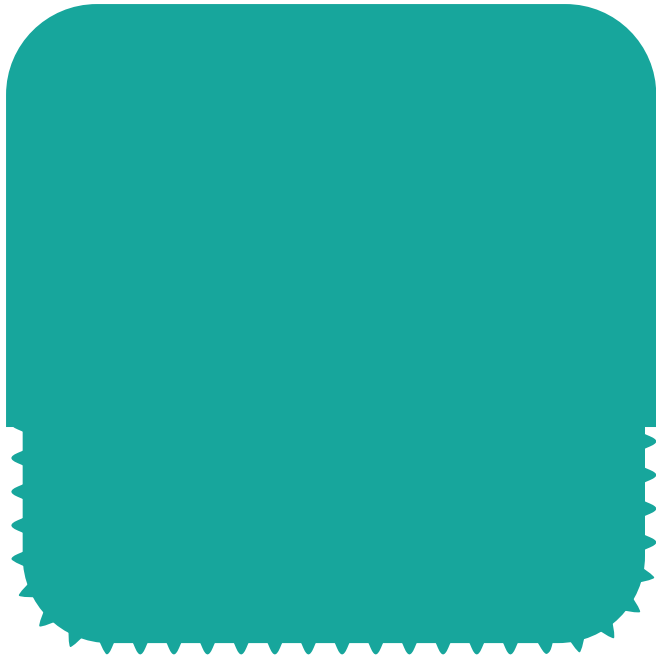
Aquatint manual

1. Cutting the plate



We used a copper plate. A zinc plate can also be used, but is rougher in structure and softer. We went down to the Metal workshop to get our copper plates cut. I chose to have mine a square shape.

2. Filing the edges



I enjoyed this bit a lot, because it is somehow like meditation. I remember feeling quite content and happy at the Graphic Art workshop, as I was filing my rather large, square copper plate. I decided it was important I take my time with it and that the corners be rounded.

3. Polishing the edges



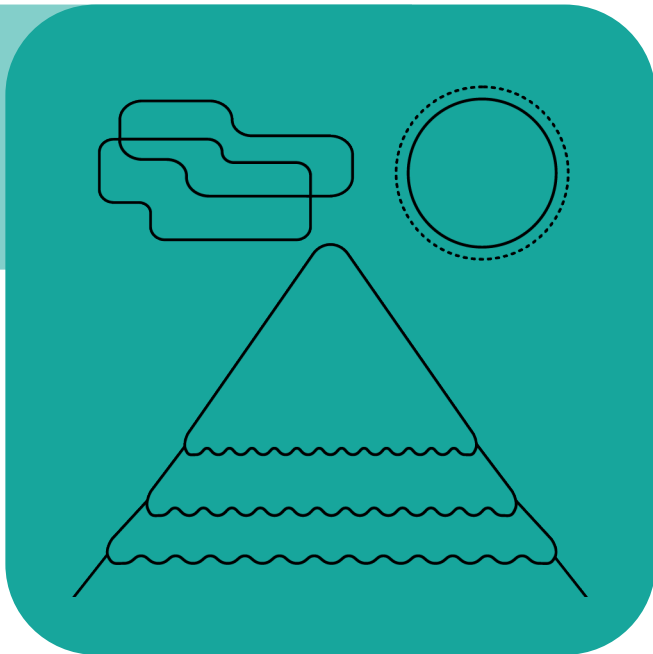
I spent quite a long time polishing my copper plate. I wanted it to be very shiny. So shiny that I could in fact see my own reflection in it. We used an old, Soviet-era polishing compound which had the color I decided to use for this manual. It was quite beautiful actually, and added a layer of mystery to the whole process.

4. A layer of granulated rosin



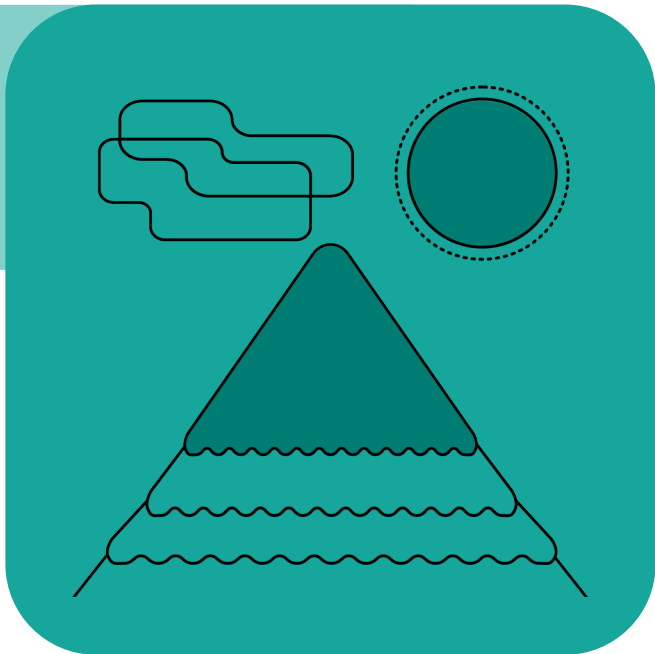
After cleaning the plate with water and ground chalk and letting it dry: we added a layer of granulated rosin and placed our plates on a special heater in the Graphic Art workshop. As the plate heats up, the granulated rosin melts down it becomes translucent and covers the plate. We let it wait at least over night after this step.

5. Taping / Copying the image



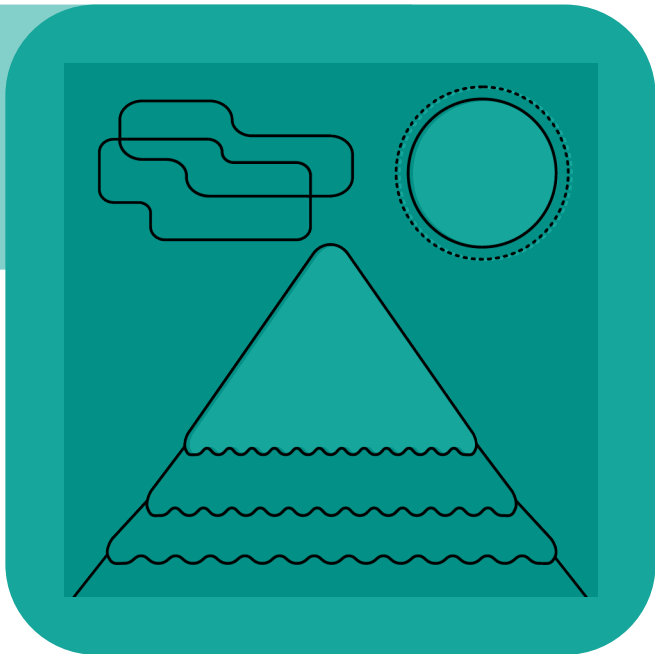
We put a layer of tape on the backside of the plate. This is done so we can place the plate in—and take it out of—the etching liquid (acid). I pencilled my image on to the plate, just the rough outlines for me to follow later on. I remembered to make the image mirrored so it would look the way I want in the end.

6. Covering-varnish on white surfaces



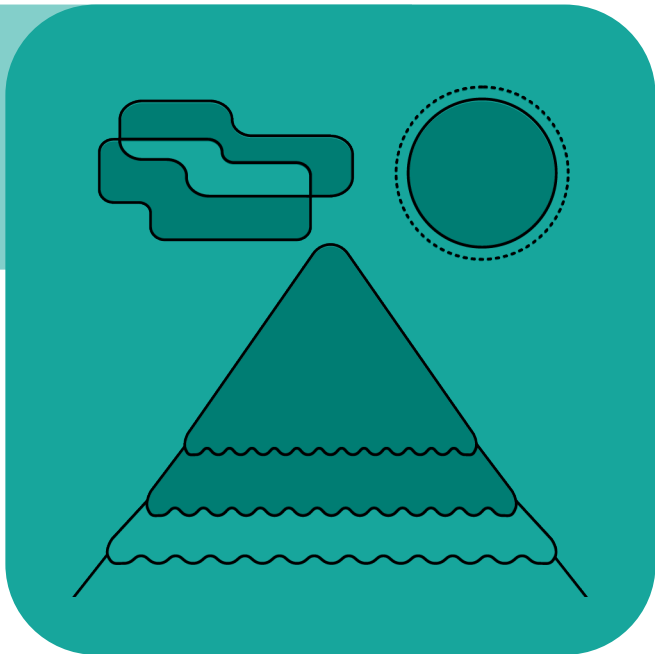
Start by covering the part you want to be completely white. For this use etching covering varnish. For this demonstration, the parts I want to be white is the sun and the top of the mountain.

7. Etching #1 (30" = light gray)



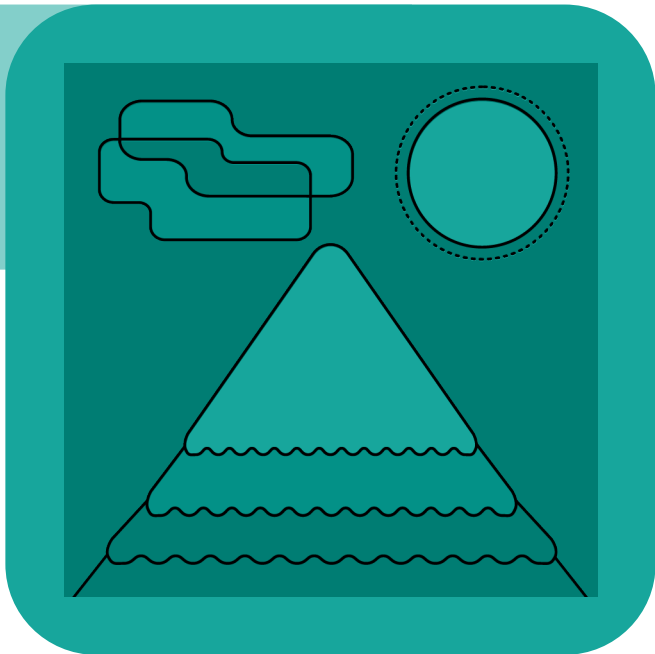
The result of the first etching is that the sun and the top of the mountain are white.

8. Cover light gray with varnish



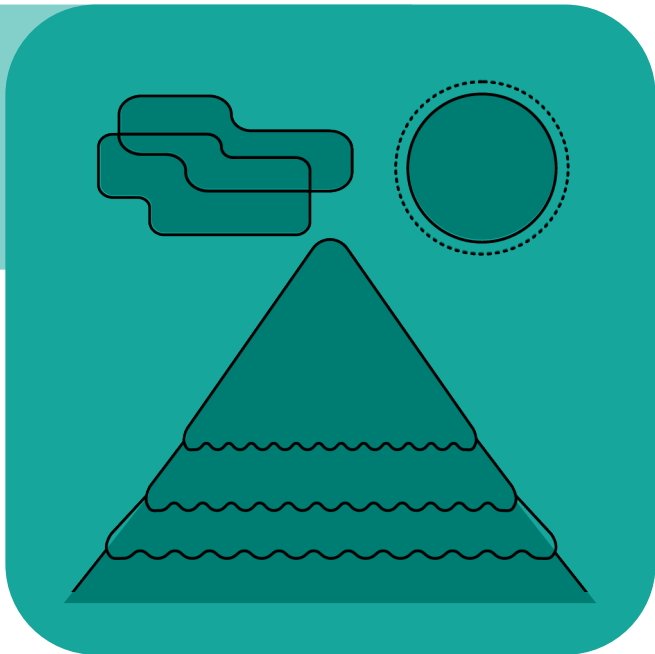
In addition to the top of mountains and sun, I continued by covering the main part of the clouds and second part of the mountain with etching covering varnish.

9. Etching #2 (5' = gray)



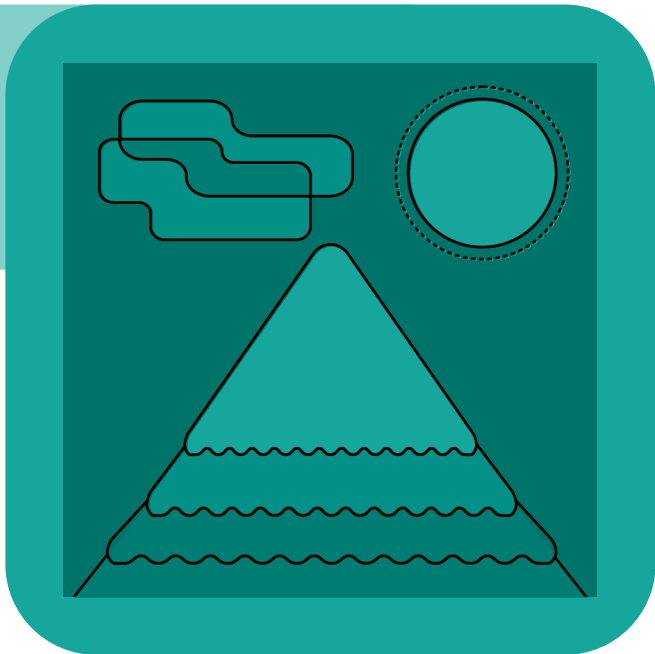
The result of the second etching is that the sun and the top of the mountain are white - the main part of the clouds and the second part of the mountain are light.

10. Cover gray with varnish



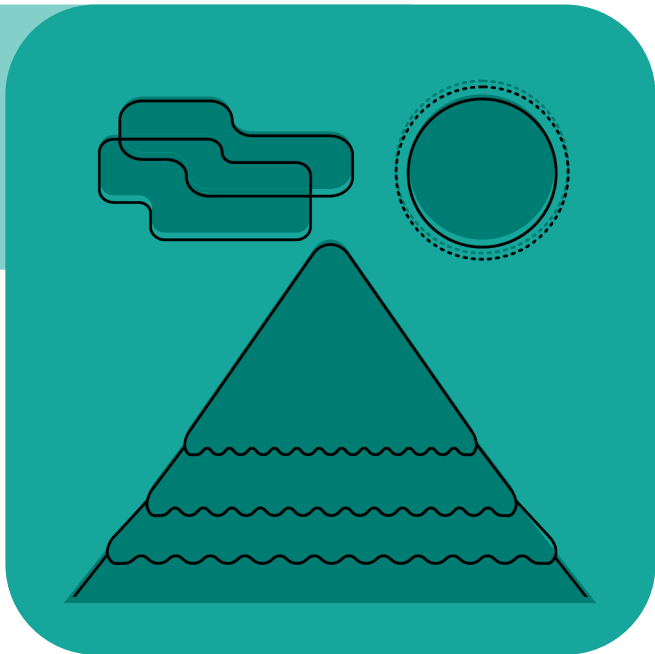
In addition to the top and second part of mountains, the sun, the main parts of the clouds, I continued by covering the rest of the clouds and third part of the mountain with etching covering varnish.

11. Etching #3 (8' = darker gray)



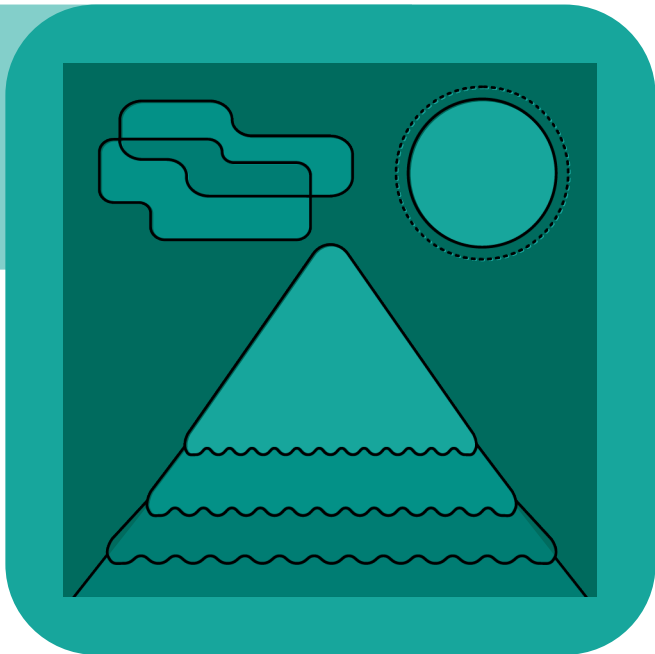
The result of the third etching is that the sun and the top of the mountain are white - the main part of the clouds and the second part of the mountain are light - the rest of the clouds and the third part of the mountain are medium.

12. Cover darker gray with varnish



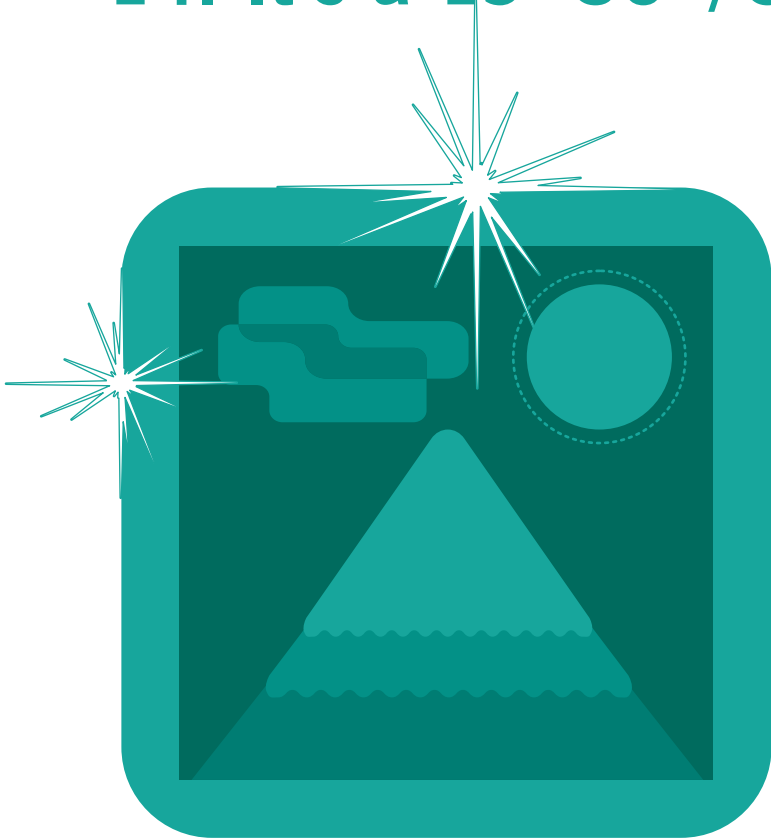
In addition to the top, the second and third part of mountains, the sun, all parts of the clouds, I continued by covering the fourth part of the mountain with etching covering varnish.

13. Etching #4 (6' = dark gray/black)



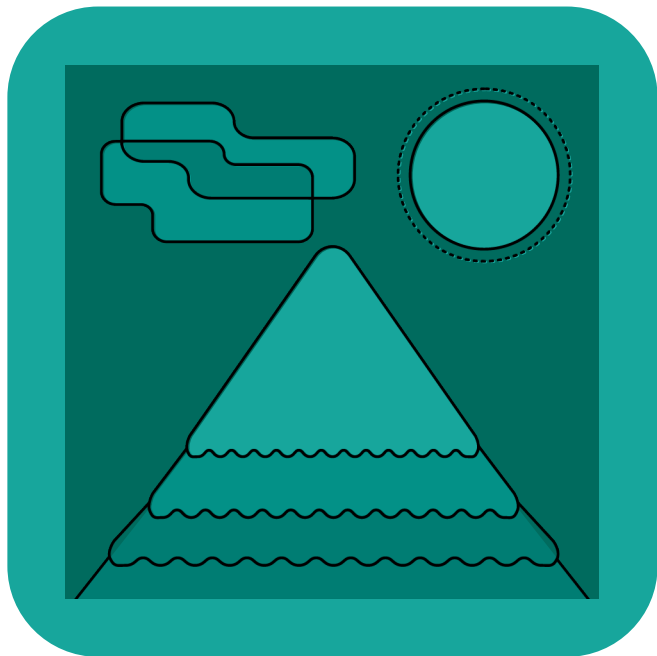
The result of the fourth etching is that the sun and the top of the mountain are white - the main part of the clouds and the second part of the mountain are light - the rest of the clouds and the third part of the mountain are medium and the fourth part of the mountain are dark.

14. It's a 19' 30"/5 shade etching



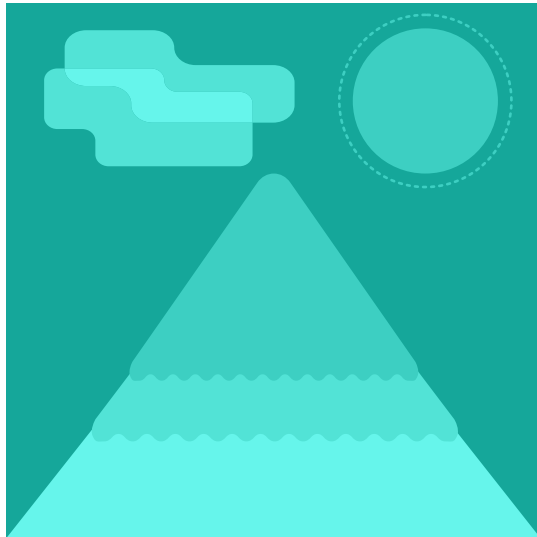
This way, the mountain has many shades, the clouds have two different shades and the background is the darkest.

15. Remove tape/varnish resin



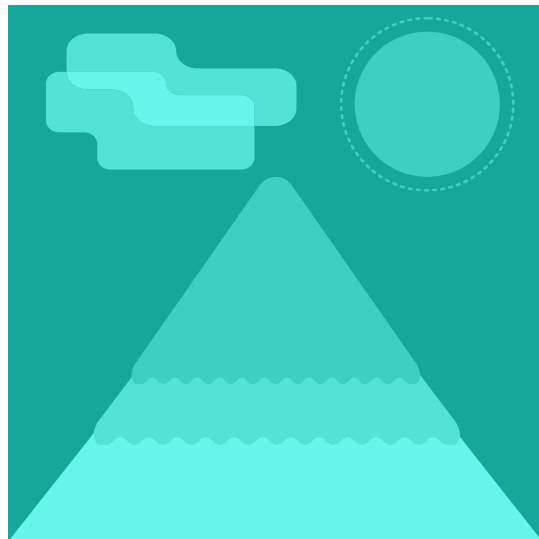
Remove the tape, varnish and resin with acetone and turpentine. We used some interesting acetone at the Graphic Art workshop. One from a dark-green painted Absolut bottle or a slim clear glass bottle with a skull on it. It gave the whole process a fun side :-)

16. Proof print



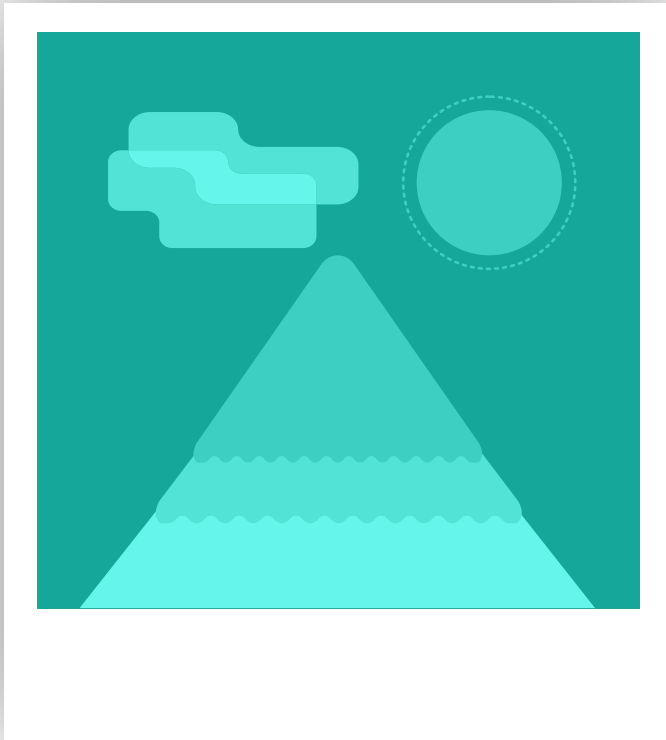
Then, you ink the plate and make a proof print. If it doesn't turn out right, you could experiment and make some dry-point marks on the plate, although traditionally the dry-point part happens before the aquatint part on the plate. It is important to be careful while making the print, making sure the paper doesn't move after it makes contact with the plate.

17. Glue the print down to the board



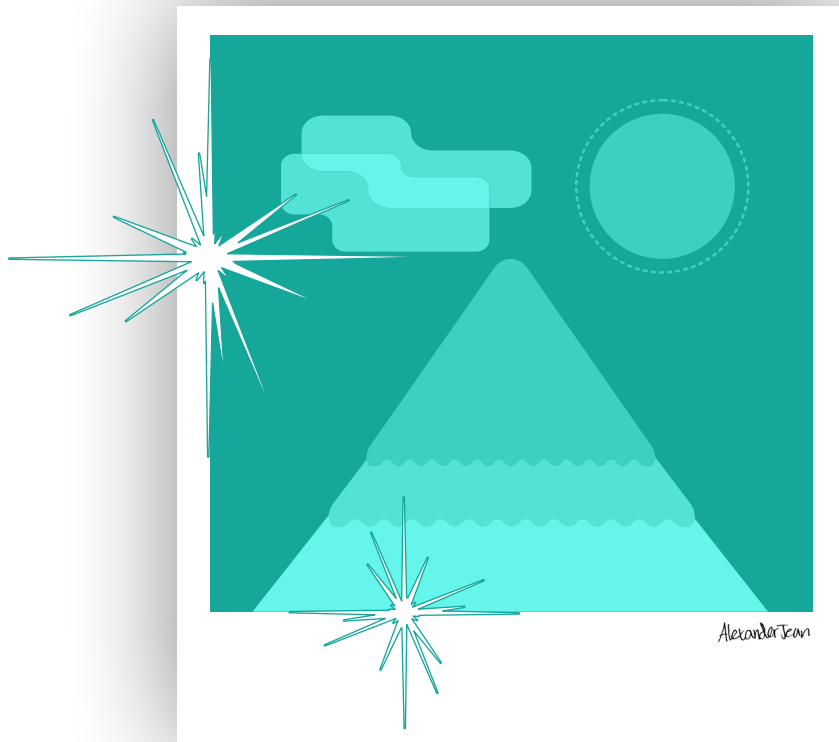
After making the print, glue it down on to a board, with some adhesive strips of paper. We used a wet sponge to glue them to the print, which keeps them tight to the board. This way, the print will keep the paper smooth and straight.

18. Remove from the board/trim edges



After letting it dry for about 24 hours, remove the paper from the board by using a box cutter. Then trim it to your liking. It can look good to trim the paper so there is a white boarder surrounding your image, even to the point that the perforated part—made by the printing plate—is visible. This is a special sign of the this kind of printing process which can be considered pretty.

19. Sign the print



It's time to sign your masterpiece. It can look good to sign your name or artistic handle underneath your image within the white boarder surrounding it. Now you could frame your print to make it extra special. You could give one to a friend who you think would like it, as a gesture of human kindness. In any case, enjoy it and keep going. Practice makes perfect, right ?

Art

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