

Being this my fourth residency at the studio and home of Amparo and Alfonso, not much time was required to find my ways around the studio and apartment! As always, I have been warmly welcomed by the hosts including their family being Sarah, Helios, Nehru and Suria. This time, my goal and objective was to get the hang of the photopolymer process: some basic attempts have already been made back home, but I hoped to get some more insight with Alfonso's support and knowledge. Aside from the photopolymer film I had brought with me, there were some „leftovers“ from years past, however, it was uncertain, whether these have stood the test of time. Aside from that, these were products from four different suppliers and although the process itself was essentially deemed identical, exposure and development times for the individual makes were possibly different. So, first days were spent to assess the workability of the available films – and as anticipated, we were able to eliminate some of the films which were unusable due to their age. In addition, the preparation of the transparencies, exposure and development times had to be aligned with the different products. By trial-and-error as well as step tests, eventually halfway satisfactory results have been achieved. A further approach was using liquid polymer: but low and behold, the polymer in Alfonso's storage proved a bit too old and did just not work any more. Fortunately, a printmaking friend in Las Palmas still had some in store which we were glad to receive as a gift: my thanks Julio Sanchez for his generosity! So off we went to apply the „wet“ polymer technique, however, due to a limited amount of material, the number of attempts was restricted. The supply of art materials on the Canary Islands poses a distinct restriction and nuisance for printmakers – what you don't wheel in yourself, you just can't get for love or good money. The reason for that is the peculiar tax system on the islands with a lower VAT compared to the EU countries, reportedly to support local consumers. Hence, imports are essentially treated as if they would come from outside the EU – and many (if not all) suppliers in the EU including the Spanish mainland just do not want to provide individuals with materials for reasons of complexity but also the protectionism for local vendors... something to keep in mind for future residents and residencies.

During my stay, I was also given the honour to demonstrate to fourteen local interested printmakers the versatility of the BIG (Baldwin Intaglio Ground) during a 2-day workshop in the Cabildo's facilities. Alfonso and I were able to show the soft ground, hard ground and icing sugar aquatint methods and it can be said, that the ensuing results could convince the workshop participants. This was also a great opportunity to meet again many of the artists, which had attended last year's Mokulito workshop. Here again, a great thank you to Ana de La Puente Arrate for the warm welcome and support in her studio.

All in all, again a great time on Gran Canaria and with the Crujeras – muchos gracias and fuerte abrazos!