Methods and processes: Step 1

The first step was to make a kit of geometric shapes by using the ‘snap-to-grid’ function in a vector drawing app, based on a consistent underlying grid. These shapes are then exported to a laser cutting programme, which cuts the shapes to a consistent size, in polypropylene. This material has the advantage of being flexible, reusable, receives ink extremely well, and being 1mm thick, behaves on press much the same as a traditional etching plate.

Methods and processes: Step 2

Once inked, all the shapes in the composition can be positioned on the press simultaneously aligned with the acetate grid which corresponds precisely to the grid in the vector drawing. The particular combination of rigidity and flexibility in the polypropylene enables accurate positioning and repositioning of elements prior to printing. Because the elements share a common geometry (based on 50mm squares) they are infinitely interchangeable.

Methods and processes: a finished print

The finished print has the embossed quality and depth of colour that only an etching press can provide as it presses real ink into real paper, unlike ‘giclée’ (ink jet) printing. The method produces a print whereby all the shapes are in perfect register, and always perfectly positioned within the paper. Above all, it is an extremely accurate manifestation of the digital design.