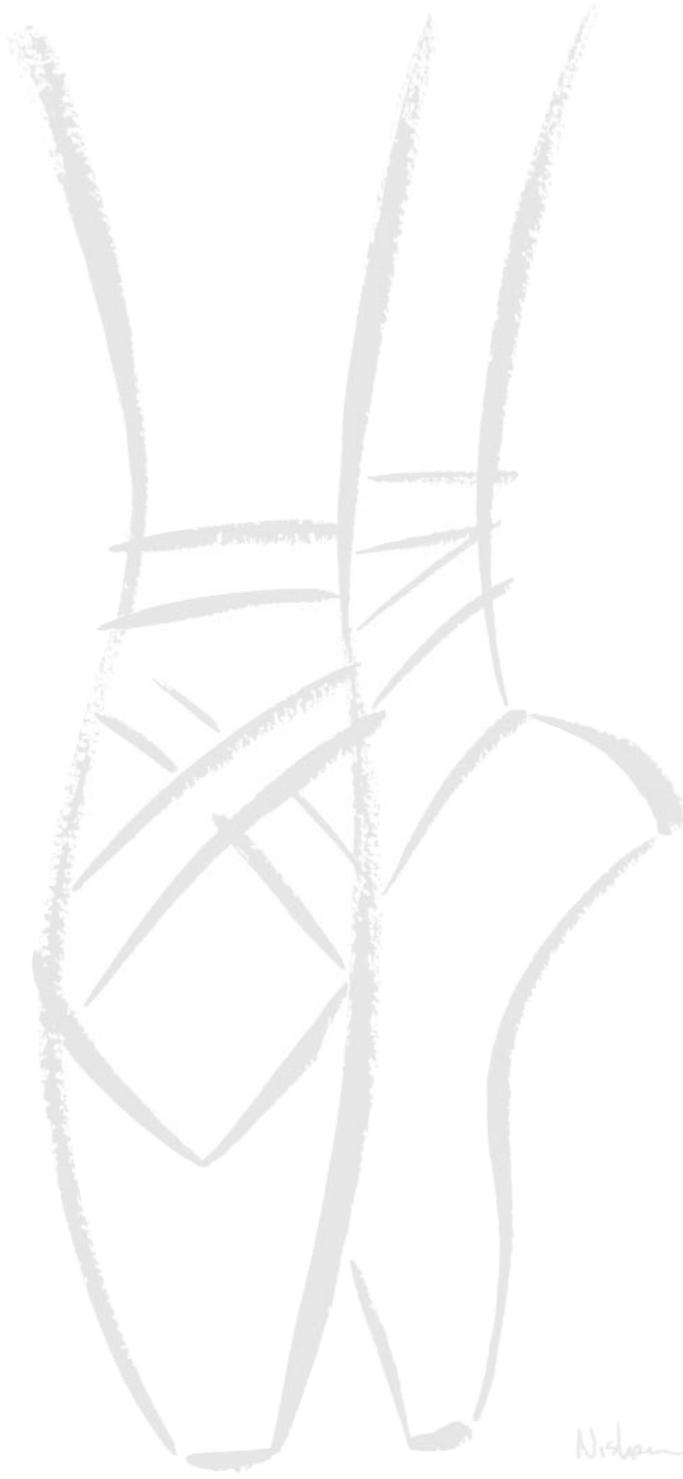


CRANE'S *on* LETTERPRESS

# 100% Cotton Performs

Letterpress began in Europe in the 14th century as an alternative to laborious calligraphy. Type was hand cast and individual characters were hand set into lines until machine set composition made the process easier. Today, many designers are returning to the craft of letterpress – printing from metal type and custom engraved plates – as a unique option to offset printing. Letterpress offers a tactile quality and nostalgic feel that can't be achieved with any other technique. Crane's paper, made from 100% cotton fibers, is the perfect match for the letterpress process. Together, they create a grace and elegance that leave a lasting impression.



## *A Balance of Strength and Beauty*

Crane's paper is made from 100% cotton fibers which sets it apart from ordinary papers. A totally renewable resource, cotton is strong and pliable which enables it to withstand the weight and pressure of the letterpress process. Since the "bite" that is characteristic of letterpress is the result of metal type or a photoengraved plate being impressed into the paper, it is important to choose a soft paper that can accentuate this effect. Beyond durability, the elegance of Crane's 100% cotton paper does not go unnoticed. Only 100% cotton has a unique softness that is pleasing to the eye and the touch, making it the ideal paper for the highly aesthetic craft of letterpress.



# Give your design a lift.

The art of letterpress can add an intriguing, tangible quality to your work. To make the most of letterpress, it's important to remember a few key things during the design phase. Fine lines and small type can be achieved with great results. If you plan to use images, black and white line art or solid shapes of color reproduce best. The majority of platen press beds are 10" x 15" or 13" x 18." The largest letterpress is about 29" x 41." Any size (length, height, width) paper can be used as long as it fits the press. On text and cover weight papers, plan for a minor debossing of type and images due to the direct metal impression into the paper. Also remember that letterpress usually uses a coarser line screen for halftones and screens than modern offset lithography. If you plan to use letterpress with other processes, such as blind embossing, lithography or engraving, consult with your printer first to decide the sequence of processes.



#### NOTE:

Some letterpress printers are equipped to handle disks, but for those who aren't, provide film negatives, right reading/emulsion up, or camera-ready black and white line or continuous tone artwork with overlay instructions.



Color can bring a lustrous dimension to letterpressed images and type. Since the letterpress process transfers more ink to the paper, the colors appear more intense and vivid than offset inks. Metallic inks can also be used to get richer looking color. Most presses used for letterpress are equipped with 4–6 ink rollers. Any match color can be used. Printers usually use offset inks or oil-based inks, both of which are laser compatible. Rubber-based inks are also used, but they are not laser compatible. In addition, inkless passes can be done to attain a “blind deboss.” For this effect, it’s best to use a soft, pliable paper like Crane’s 100% cotton paper.

ablaze  
with  
COLOR

#### MASTERING THE TECHNIQUES.

If halftones are to be printed, check with your printer. Since the letterpress plate comes in contact only with the raised areas of a paper’s surface, he might need to “pack” or cushion the areas of the cylinder where halftones appear for a heavier impression.

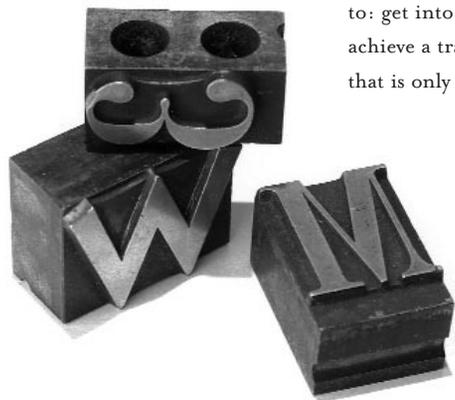
There are various ways to achieve the effects of letterpress. Since designers can now set type and assemble their own pages on computers, using plates is an easier alternative to hand setting metal type. However, designers who want a “traditional” look to their type, with more space between letters, or fonts that no longer exist may choose to hand set their type or use Linotype\*.

MAKING PLATES

**How:** Most plates are made of a polymer (photo resistant) or hard rubber. Magnesium, zinc, and copper plates are also used.

**Why:** Gives designers control over spacing and sizes; more practical, faster, easier. No limitation on fonts that can be used, you can achieve halftones and images with ease.

**When to use:** For long runs, and any document over 4 pages with small type.



SETTING TYPE

**How:** Foundry type, which is made of steel, consists of individual characters that can be set into words and sentences by hand in a job stick\*. Type can also be set on a Linotype machine. Some type is set so that only a reproduction proof is pulled. This “repro” is then treated like the high resolution output of a computer. After being corrected and put in place on a mechanical, it is camera-ready.

After printing, type used for hand setting is redistributed in a case for future use. **When to use:** For designers who want to: get into the “craft” of letterpress, achieve a traditional look, or use a font that is only found in foundry type.



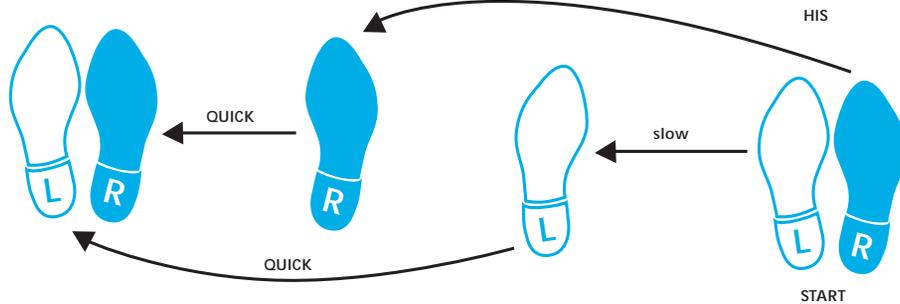
NOTE:

Not all printers are capable of printing from hand set or machine-set type as well as from original or duplicate printing plates. Check with your printer first.

\* See glossary

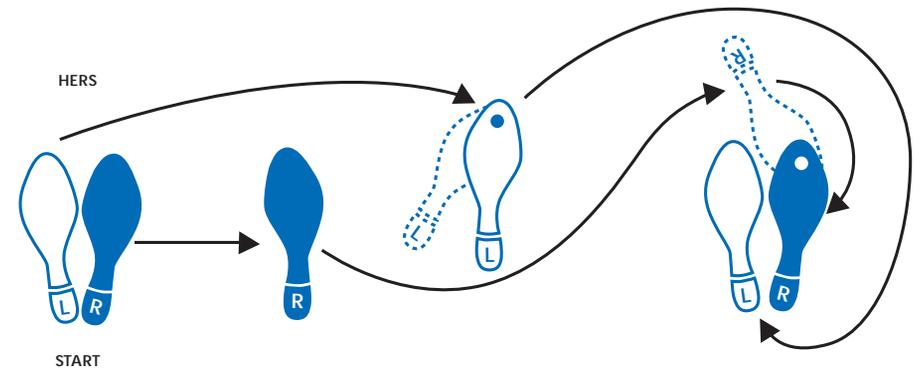
# step 1

Plates can be mounted either to wood or metal with two-sided tape. Hand set type is locked into a chase\* with a quoin\* to keep it in place. The chase is placed into the press and locked into position. All pressure is removed from the press so as not to crush or damage the die. Packing is added to the platen under the tympan\* sheet for "type-high"\* printability.



# step 4

The ink rollers are set to make contact with the die. Too much pressure will cause the ink to wrap around the side of the image causing it to smudge. Not enough pressure will cause light areas to appear in the image. Proper pressure between ink rollers and plates is very important to insure good letterpress.



# step 2

The feeder is set up to feed paper and drop it into the proper area of delivery. Side guides are set for registration on press.

# step 3

A blind impression is hit on the paper. The pressure is increased slowly so the die is not damaged. Additional packing is added to the areas that appear to need more pressure.

# step 5

The pressure is reduced slightly, and the first sheets are sent through the press. The operator moves the pressure up to a desired deboss level, and checks for low areas. Final packing is added to low areas, called "patchwork."

# step 6

The press operator is now ready to begin the printing process. As he prints, the operator may need to stop from time to time to do additional patchwork.

\* See glossary

# putting your best foot forward.

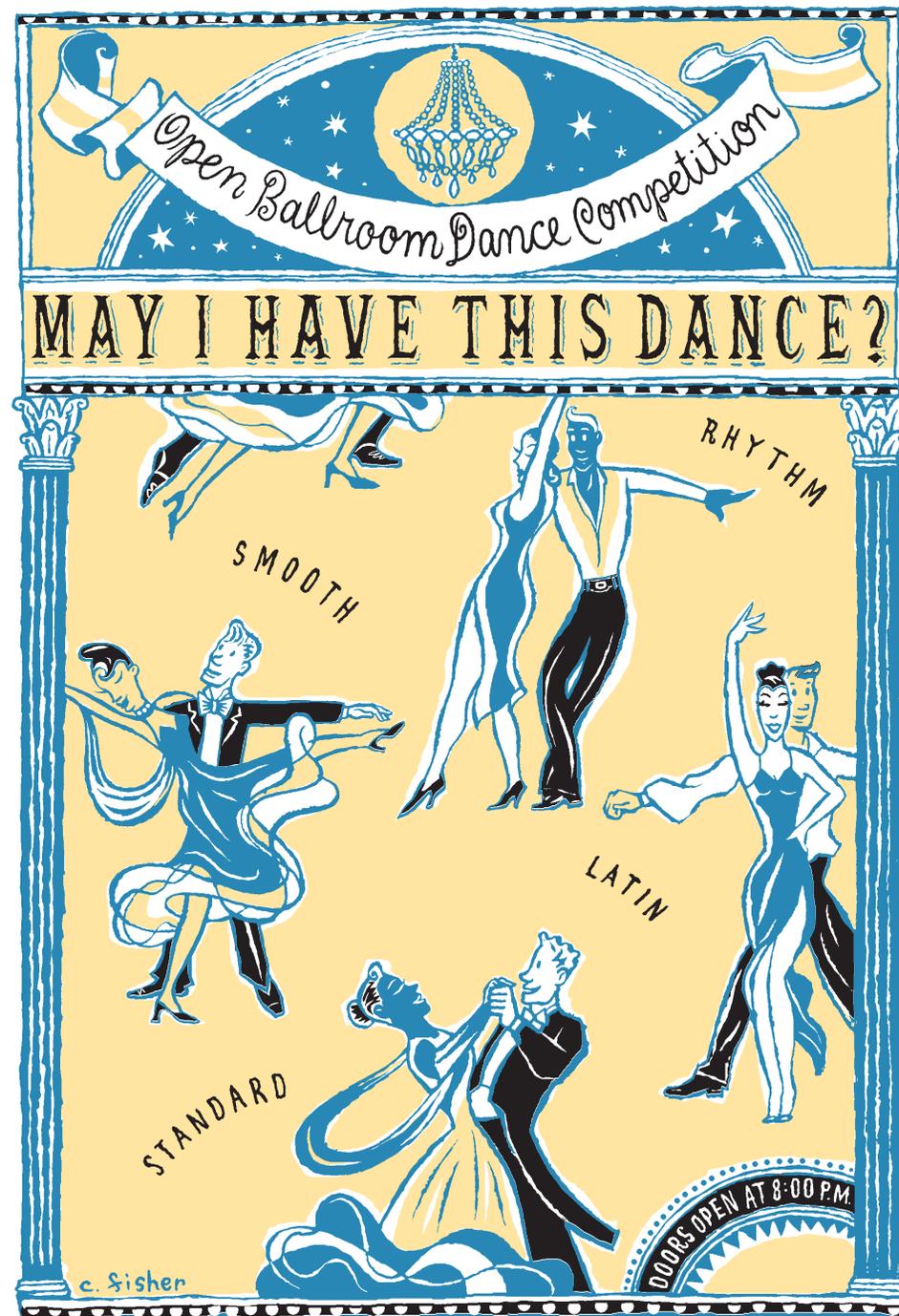
Letterpress on Crane's 100% cotton paper can make a strong statement about quality. Today, platen presses are most commonly used for the letterpress process. These carry both the paper and the type on flat surfaces known as the platen and the bed which open and close like a clamshell. Other types of presses used for letterpress include flatbed cylinder two-revolution presses, single revolution vertical presses and rotary sheet-fed presses. Printers can print directly from metal type or use custom plates.

When on press, there are four factors that affect the outcome: roller pressure, paper, amount of ink and impression depth. By making refinements to these factors, you and your printer can tailor your artwork to a desired effect.



#### CHECKING PROOFS: ACHIEVE PERFECTION.

When on a press check, always look for sharp, even impressions and dense opaque colors. Check the back of the sheet for depth of letterpress impression. If using multiple color images, be sure they are all in register. Sometimes, letterpress printers can provide progressives and press proofs on the actual stock used, which is the best way to see what the final printed piece will look like.





Crane's all-cotton business papers are the natural choice.  
 Made from 100% cotton, a renewable resource,  
 Crane's paper is totally tree-free.  
 For samples or information,  
 call the Neenah Paper Sample Department at 800-994-5993.

#### CREDITS

**Design:** Keiler & Company, Farmington, CT

**Letterpress Printing:** Dickson's, Atlanta, GA

All letterpress in this book was done with copper plates.

Technical information provided in part by Professor Gaw/Dickson's Lab.

Folder Letterpress: Wild Carrot Letterpress, Hadley, MA

#### Illustration:

Edwin Fotheringham - cover, p5

Nishan Akgulian, David Goldman Agency - p2, 3

Raymond Verdager - p6

Eric Panke - p9

Carolyn Fisher - p13 and handlettering

#### GLOSSARY

**Chase:** A large metal frame in which type is locked-up for printing.

**Job Stick:** A metal hand-held frame in which type is set before being placed in the chase.

**Letterpress:** A method of printing from raised surfaces such as set type or plates.

**Linotype:** A typesetting machine that casts an entire line of type in one bar.

**Quoin:** A piece of metal used to lock set type in place so it won't move during printing.

**Type-high:** (0.918") The average setting of the press which allows you to achieve a proper impression.

**Tympan sheet:** A coated sheet of paper that covers the platen, creating a cushion from the direct metal impression.