

Use White and Varnish Spotcolors to create designs with structure

1. Import a raster image (tiff, jpg, png) with a clear visible structure (leather, wood, stone, paper, etc...). Make sure the image is embedded. Duplicate this image, and keep it on top of the original image. Convert the image to grayscale. If needed, you can also invert the image before you convert to grayscale (Edit - Edit Colors - Convert to Grayscale. Invert is found in the same menu. Important : You MUST convert to grayscale via this menu, even if the image is already grayscale. If you fail to do so, you will not be able to assign a spotcolor to the image).

Remark : Try to avoid the use of clipping masks over the image. Clipping masks may conflict with the Overprint Attribute mentioned in step 3. Instead, try to pre-crop the image via photoshop before importing it into Illustrator.

In the example on the right, I will use two grayscale images. One for White, and one for Varnish. For overprinting, the Spotcolor images must always be on top, even if you want the white to be under the colors. The RIP will eventually take care of the order in which the inks are used, regardless of the design.

Note that if you want to have a strong structure, you can use both white and varnish. The white underneath the colors will also add to the structure feeling.

2. Create Spotcolors for White and Varnish. Important : When a raster shape is selected, you cannot create a spotcolor. First deselect your raster shape, otherwise you will notice that the "New Swatch" button is grayed out. Next, drag your Spotcolor onto the grayscale image that should use that specific color.

3. Make sure that the Grayscale Raster image with the spotcolor is on top of the color image, and assign the Overprint Fill attribute to the grayscale image. It is possible to change the Opacity of the grayscale image, to adjust the amount of ink that will be used.

4. Open the image in your RIP (make sure that the rip is set to recognize the spotcolors) and use the driver settings to change the order of ink channels.

