

# Raven Victoria Erebus

## About the Photogravure Process

The Language of Birds is collection of photogravure prints printed on Rives BFK heavyweight 100% cotton rag paper printed with oil-based ink.

I choose to work with the photogravure process because of the beautiful tonal range, the texture it adds, and the ability to creatively color the print. Another advantage of this process is that photogravure prints are more archival than standard photography.

I use photopolymer intaglio plates for this process. Each plate is exposed first to ultraviolet light (UV) through an aquatint screen, which is composed of random tiny dots, that provides texture needed to allow ink to stick to the plate. Then a second exposure is made with a film positive. Where the UV light hits, the plate hardens; this area will print as a white area. The plate is then washed out, dried, and then re-exposed to UV to harden it.

After that, the plate is inked up like an etching, where the ink left behind in the grooves is what appears in the final print. Ink is spread across the entire plate and then wiped from the surface. Each print is then hand-colored with *a la poupee* technique on the actual plate before printing. Once the plate is inked, it is run through an etching press to transfer the ink onto the paper.

Some images also have *Chine-collé* as an added texture for the background. Before printing, a thin Japanese mulberry paper is laid over the inked plate, flour is sifted on top of it, then the dampened cotton rag paper is laid over both the plate and the thin mulberry paper, and run through the press. This essentially glues the thin paper to the more sturdy cotton rag paper and prints the image onto it at the same time.

This process is very labor intensive, but results in beautiful prints—each with slight variations due to the handmade nature of the process.