



4-Color Process Separation Guide

ZODIAC[™]
ECOCENTRIC INKS

1. DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The image for the design must be full size and at least 300 dpi to deliver a good end result. Scan, load, or design the image into Adobe® Photoshop® while it is set in RGB mode. If you should receive art from an outside source that is already converted to CMYK, ask if you could get the original design in RGB. If that is not possible, open the image in Photoshop and then change the mode to RGB. You should not see any change in the appearance of the file.

2. ESTABLISH THE WHITE AND BLACK POINTS IN THE ENTIRE DESIGN

This action can be done quickly by converting to Lab mode, selecting the lightness channel, and selecting “Levels” (command L). Move the levels to arrows in the preview box until you have a full black area and a full white area. This step is also dependent on the artist’s preference. For example, if the design is a very pastel watercolor replication, the design may not need the full tint/shade values.

3. USE THE CORRECT COLOR DATA

Ask the appropriate Zodiac™ Aquarius™ representative or distributor for the Photoshop custom set or “color values” for the 4-color process set. To load the CMYK color settings, go to the Photoshop menu; select “EDIT” > “Color Settings.” In the Color Settings pop-up window, choose “LOAD.” This will enable the artist to select the .csf file that will load the correct values. The set will load into the previous window showing the custom name, black limit, and dot gain ratios. Once this file is loaded, it will remain as the default process color until it is changed or a new CMYK setting is loaded. The set should be saved in an easily identifiable folder so that it can be located at any time. This allows the program to separate the exact colors you will be printing with. You should see very little change in the image when converted to CMYK.

4. CONVERT THE FILE TO CMYK

Once the data is loaded, it is time to convert to CMYK. The result will be the CMYK channels and any other channel created before this conversion.

5. ADJUST BLACK LEVELS

One important step is to scale back the black plate. Select the Black channel, select “Curves” (command M), and then drag the left arrow to the right to the 25% mark. This removes the black out of the 25% and the lower gray areas. The cyan, magenta, and yellow information will cover the gray areas without the black. The design may appear light on the monitor, but trust that it will print darker on the press. This is important to keep the gray area from being invaded by the black plate.

6. OUTPUT

Though there are many schools of thought on this process, we recommend using staggered angles on the halftone to help thwart odd patterns in the interaction between colors. Start the angles slightly skewed of 0, then spaced between colors of 15 degrees.

Yellow: 7° angle

Magenta: 22° angle

Cyan: 37° angle

Black/white: 52° angle

Use 55–65 line count on the resolution.



Lookout Point

Navigating the seas can be treacherous without a guiding light. Lookout Point utilizes the Aquarius™ Soft Base CMYK color profile to bring color to life, even in the darkest places.



PRINT PARAMETERS

1. Aquarius Soft Base – Yellow 
300 t/in (117 t/cm) mesh
2. Aquarius Soft Base – Magenta 
300 t/in (117 t/cm) mesh
3. Aquarius Soft Base – Cyan 
300 t/in (117 t/cm) mesh
4. Aquarius Soft Base – Black 
300 t/in (117 t/cm) mesh
5. Aquarius Soft Base – White 

Earthly Interpretations

The zodiac is interpreted through the elements of fire, water, earth, and air. However, we only begin to see the larger picture from their proximity to each other. Earthly Interpretations showcases the Aquarius™ Soft Base CMYK color profile and its ability to capture a spectrum of colors using just a few.



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4. Aquarius Soft Base – Black 
300 t/in (117 t/cm) mesh
5. Aquarius Soft Base – White 

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