



PRINT FROG® GLASS BAREN

A breakthrough tool born in the print studio

IRON FROG PRESS · DALLAS, TEXAS

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The Print Frog® Glass Baren is a hand-blown glass printmaking tool designed to allow artists to print relief blocks without a press. It was developed by master printmaker Matt Bagley after a series of physically demanding editions revealed the limitations—and injuries—associated with traditional hand-printing tools.

Today, the Print Frog® is used in studios, classrooms, and workshops worldwide as an ergonomic, press-free alternative for relief printing.

ORIGIN STORY

The Print Frog® was born out of necessity in Matt Bagley's studio practice.

He was working on an edition of relief blocks that were too warped to run through a traditional press. At the same time, years of hand-printing with wooden spoons, inexpensive plastic tools, and traditional baren had resulted in repetitive strain injuries. Faced with a large edition and increasing physical pain, he found himself unable to continue printing in the usual way.

A friend suggested experimenting with glass as a material for a baren.

Matt collaborated with a local North Texas glassblower to produce the first prototype in 2013. The results exceeded expectations: the glass tool delivered even pressure, reduced strain, and made it possible to print difficult blocks by hand.

Rather than create a single tool, the glassblower produced approximately forty early prototypes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Matt tested them in his studio and shared them with fellow printmakers. Demand emerged immediately—artists began asking for more.

It became clear that other printmakers were experiencing the same frustration with traditional hand-printing tools.

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY



The Print Frog® is built on the principle that:
Efficiency enables creativity.

By reducing physical strain and expanding what can be printed by hand, the tool allows artists to focus on experimentation, scale, and process rather than equipment limitations.

NAME AND STUDIO HISTORY

The name “Print Frog” originates from Matt Bagley’s studio, Iron Frog Press. While setting up his printmaking studio in 2010, his parents gave him a small iron frog trinket. The object became the inspiration for the studio name.

When the glass baren project developed, the Print Frog name naturally followed.



PRODUCT EVOLUTION

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2014 — First Production Print Frogs

By 2014, the first production Print Frog® Glass Barens were released. These were among the earliest commercially produced glass barens designed specifically for relief printmaking.

The material proved ideal:

- Heavy enough to apply pressure without extra physical force
- Low-friction surface reduces paper drag and tearing
- Easy to clean and highly durable
- Reduces strain associated with repetitive printing motions

2016 — Expanded Line

- Pro Print Frog
- Designed for large-scale prints, large editions, glass plate printing, and encaustic monoprinting.
- Studio Print Frog™ (original model)
- Best suited for small to medium relief blocks including linoleum, wood, MDF, damaged blocks, collagraph, chine-collé, and fabric printing.

2019 — Miniature Range

- Froglette Print Frog
Designed for very small wood engravings, fine detail work, and delicate substrates.
- Tadpole Print Frog
The smallest model, designed for tiny blocks and rubber stamps.



MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTION



The Print Frog® range is produced by master glassblowers in North Texas using two glass types:

Borosilicate Glass (Pro, Froglette, Tadpole)

- High strength and durability
- Low friction surface
- Heat-resistant
- Used in scientific and cookware applications
- Allows for precise shaping and performance consistency

Recycled Soft Glass (Studio Print Frog)

- Made from reclaimed glass
- Faster to produce
- More organic variation in form and feel
- Retains excellent weight and print performance

Each tool is hand-blown, meaning no two Print Frogs are identical.



DESIGN FEATURES

- Ergonomic knob handle designed for long printing sessions
- Weighted glass body eliminates need for excess physical pressure
- Rounded radius edge allows controlled pressure for fine detail work
- “Chill marks” texture on the underside—naturally formed during glass cooling—was retained after testing showed it improves performance and grip during printing

PERFORMANCE & APPLICATIONS



The Print Frog® Glass Baren is designed for:

- Relief printing without a press
- Printing warped or irregular blocks
- Large edition hand-printing with reduced fatigue
- Fabric and textile printing
- Collagraph and chine-collé processes
- Monoprinting and experimental surfaces
- Off-grid or mobile print studios

It is especially effective for blocks that cannot be safely run through a press.



ACCESSIBILITY & STUDIO PRACTICE

A core aspect of the Print Frog® design is accessibility.

Because it removes the need for a press, it allows:

- Self-taught artists to build functional print studios
- Elderly artists or artists with physical limitations to continue printmaking
- Reduced strain for artists with repetitive motion injuries
- Off-grid or low-equipment print practices

Matt Bagley has emphasized the Print Frog as a tool that broadens access to printmaking rather than restricting it to press-based studios.

The Print Frog® Glass Baren is a handcrafted printmaking tool that emerged from studio necessity and evolved into a widely adopted alternative to press-based relief printing. Its combination of weight, low friction, and ergonomic design has made it a staple in contemporary printmaking practice.

CONTACT US

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Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you! For press inquiries, interview requests, or more information about the Print Frog and Iron Frog Press, please get in touch with us.

