Using the Plotter

Installing the Program:

Check out the installation guide at axidraw.com/sw to download and install the program (Inkscape plus an extension) on your computer.

Preparing a File:

The plotter uses vector files from Inkscape. You can create designs directly in Inkscape, or you can create them in illustrator and then open the .AI or .SVG file in Inkscape.

1. Your design document should be the same size as the paper you are working with.

To get an idea of how your file will look once it's drawn, set all lines to a constant color and all stroke weights the same:

1. In Inkscape, go to "Edit" > "Select all in all Layers".
2. Open the "Fill and Stroke" menu using "Object" > "Fill and Stroke".
3. In the "Fill" tab, click on the "No Paint" icon. In the "Stroke Paint" tab, select "Flat Color" and choose the color you want to preview.
4. In the "Stroke Style" tab, choose a width that approximately matches the width of the pen you want to use.

You'll also need to convert any editable text in your design into a path that the plotter can trace.

1. Select all your text objects, and go to "Path" > "Object to Path".
2. Get rid of the fill and set the stroke width (as above.)
3. If you want your text to be filled in, select it and go to "Extensions" > "AxiDraw" and choose "Hatch Fill". Adjust the fill settings as you want and then click "apply".

Setting up the Plotter:

1. Make sure that the power and USB cables are both unplugged.
2. Move the carriage (the part where the pen attaches) to the Home position by hand. "Home" is marked on the left hand side of the print -- slide the carriage as far as it will go up and to the left.
3. Plug in the power cable and plug the USB into your computer.
4. In Inkscape, go to "Extensions" > "AxiDraw" > "AxiDraw Control" and choose the "Setup" tab.
5. Select "Toggle Pen between UP, DOWN" and click "apply." Make sure that the pen holder moves up and down.

6. With the pen holder in the UP position, place your pen in the holder and tighten the black screw to hold the pen in place. The tip of the pen should be just slightly above the level of the paper.
7. Position your paper so that the top left corner is directly below the pen. Secure the paper, either by clipping it to the clip easel (The small board provided) or by taping it down.
8. Toggle the pen holder back to DOWN position. It should rest against the paper.

Plotting:

1. When you are ready to plot your design, go into the "Plot" tab of the "AxiDraw Control" tab and click on "Apply."
2. The "cancel" button in Inkscape doesn't do anything. To pause the plotter, use the small silver button on the left end of the plotter. Once it is paused you can cancel the build, or restart it in the "Resume" tab of the "AxiDraw Control" window.
3. When you are finished using the plotter, unplug the USB from your computer, and unplug the power cable at the outlet. Please leave the USB and power cords plugged into the plotter.

For more detailed instructions, go to axidraw.com/guide .