

ESSENTIALS OF PRINTMAKING PAPER - TERMINOLOGY

TECHNIQUES

Aquatint: Fine particles of acid-resistant resin (rosin) are deposited on the plate and heated so they adhere to the surface. The plate is immersed in acid, which bites into the plate around each particle. The tiny depressions retain the ink and when printed give the effect of a soft grain similar to watercolor.

A La Poupée: Method of color inking in intaglio in which more than one color is inked on a single plate.

Chine Collé: A print in which the image is impressed onto a thin sheet of oriental paper, which is backed, by a stronger, thicker sheet. Oriental paper takes an intaglio impression more easily than regular paper, so *chine collé* prints generally show a richer impression than standard prints.

Collage: Artwork comprising portions of various existing images or materials, such as from photographs or prints or torn papers, and arranged so that they join, overlap, or blend to create a new image.

Collograph: Plate made by gluing material(s) to a plane surface. When inked in intaglio and/or relief, the image is transferred from the plate to paper and is simultaneously embossed. The name comes from "collage".

Digital Print: An electronically processed image composed of bits and bytes, usually created with a computer.

Drypoint: Drawing directly on metal plate with a sharp point (steel scribe) that produces a burr by displacing the metal, rather than removing the metal. The burr holds the ink, producing a fuzzy, soft line.

Engraving: Lines are incised into a copper plate with a burin. The curls of copper thrown up at the sides of the furrow are cleaned away with a scraper.

Etching: A metal plate is coated with a varnish-like substance (known as the "ground") that is impervious to acid. The image is created by drawing through the ground with an etching needle, exposing areas of metal. The whole plate is then immersed in acid until the exposed lines are sufficiently bitten, producing grooves in the metal that will hold the ink. The ground is removed and the plate is ready to be inked and printed.

Giclée: French for "sprayed ink." Giclée prints (also called Iris prints) are usually produced on an Iris ink-jet printer, capable of producing millions of colors using continuous-tone technology. Giclée prints are often made from photographic images of paintings in order to produce high quality, permanent reproductions of them. The extra-fine image resolution possible in this printing process permits retention of a high degree of fine detail from the original image, rendering deeply saturated colors having a broad range of tonal values.

Intaglio: Italian for "cut in". An intaglio print image is printed from a recessed design incised or etched into the surface of a plate. The ink lies below the surface of the plate and is transferred to the paper under pressure. The printed lines of an intaglio print stand in relief on the paper.

Letterpress: inked letters pressed into paper; a traditional method of printing.

Mezzotint: Process of producing a mechanical burr on a metal plate by using a mezzotint rocker. Process produces very rich blacks and values.

Monoprint: Ink or paint applied onto an etched or engraved plate. Each print has the same matrix, however each image is unique because the hand applied ink or paint is different for each image.

Monotype: Ink or paint is applied to a smooth plate. Because there is no fixed matrix, each image is unique.

Offset Lithography: The image is transferred from the stone or plate to a roller on the press, which then prints the inked image onto the paper

Planograph: The image and non-image are on the same level surface.

Woodcut: Printing technique in which the printing surface has been carved from a block of wood, traditionally seasoned hardwood (apple, beech, or sycamore). A modern trend uses more inexpensive soft woods such as pine. It is one of the oldest forms of printing, first used by the Chinese in the 12th century.

Viscosity Printing: Method of color printing based on the relative oil content and stiffness of printing inks.

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Asphaltum: Liquid tar used as ingredient of hard and soft grounds and as a stop out.

Block: A piece of wood used as a matrix for a print. Primarily used for woodcuts or wood engravings.

Burin: Tool used for engraving lines on metal.

Burnisher: Tool used to smooth and polish a plate or diminish lines or dark tones on a plate.

Dabber: A soft felt tool used for inking a plate in intaglio.

Dutch Mordant: Etching mixture for copper of hydrochloric acid, potassium chlorate and water.

Gum Arabic: A secretion of the acacia tree. Used in the processing of stone and metal plate lithography.

Haden Scribe: A steel tool with a twisted center shaft and point on both ends. Used for drawing image in etching and drypoint.

Hardground: Acid-resistant asphaltum ground that comes in liquid or ball form.

Hollow Scraper: A tool used to “erase” lines and tones by physically removing the metal.

Laid paper: Wires ARE used to support the paper pulp emboss their pattern into the paper. The pattern of crossing lines is seen when the paper is held up to light. Laid paper often has a watermark.

Mordant: Acid solution used for etching a metal plate.

Rosin: Natural, acid-resistant resin used in aquatints.

Smoking the Plate: Process of using wax tapers to release carbon and impregnate a warmed, soften, hard ball ground. The result is a blackened ground allowing greater visibility of drawn lines.

Soft Ground: Acid-resistant ground consisting of beeswax and liquid asphaltum.

Sugar Lift: A ground that dissolves in water-sugar solution that produces brush stroke textures on the plate.

Tarlatan: Thin stiff (sized) muslin or cheesecloth used for wiping inked plates and for drawing in the Reductive Monotype process.

Wove Paper: Made by machine on a belt and lacks laid lines. Most prints made prior to 1800 are on laid paper. Most prints made after 1800 are on wove paper.

PRINT DESIGNATIONS

Artist's Proofs: Impressions from an edition that belong to the artist. Additional to the numbered edition and are designated artist proof or A/P. The number of artist's proofs is about 10% of the edition size.

Blind stamp: An embossed seal impressed onto a print as a distinguishing mark by the artist, the publisher, an institution, or a collector. Also called a chop mark.

Bon à Tirer: “Good to Pull”. The print that meets the artist’s expectation. Used to compare other prints, by the printer, while printing the edition.

Edition: A set of identical prints or the entire number of prints taken from the printing element. All are numbered or notated and signed by the artist.

Ghost Image/Ghost Print: The ink left over after a Monoprint or Monotype is printed. The plate is then printed again without re-inking or painting. The Ghost Print is an exact duplicate of the initial print but much lighter, due to having less ink.

Impression: A single piece of paper with an image printed on it from the printing matrix.

Laser compatible: Paper that can be printed in a laser printer or copier. Laser compatible paper has good dimensional stability to keep it from curling, changing shape, and causing paper jams in printers and copiers.

Limited Edition: A limited number of impressions are printed in order to create a scarcity of the print. Limited editions are usually numbered and signed. They are a recent development from the late 19th century. Before then, the number of impressions printed was dictated by market demand or by the maximum number that could be printed by the medium used.

With lithography and steel-facing of metal plates in the 19th century tens of thousands of quality impressions could be printed. This led to creation of limited edition prints, by which imposed scarcity created demand.

Matrix: An object upon which an image has been created and is used to make multiple printed impressions.

Numbered Print: Part of a limited edition and which has been numbered by hand. Usually in the form of x/y. y stands for the total number of impressions in the edition and x represents the specific number of the print. The number of a print indicates the order in which the prints were numbered, not necessarily the order in which the impressions were pulled. The numbering of prints is a development of the late 19th century.

Plate Mark: Un-inked, embossed mark left on the printing paper by the borders of the plate.

Proof: A print taken prior to the regular edition. A Trial Proof is a print of the image under development.

Restrike: A later impression, printed after the edition is done.

Watermark: A distinguishing mark or device impressed on the sheet of paper during manufacture. Noticeable when the sheet is held up to light. Invented in 1282. Two types: Filigraine (paper-mark) and Chiaroscuro.

Relief print: The image is printed from a design raised on the surface of a block. In this type of print the ink lies on the top of the block and is transferred to the paper under light pressure.

Screenprint/Serigraph/Silkscreen: Silk or synthetic mesh is stretched tightly over a frame. A stencil is adhered to the fabric blocking the nonprinting areas. The image areas are open fabric through which ink is forced with a squeegee.

Signed Print: Fine art prints hand signed by the artist. Introduced in 1880’s by James Whistler.

State: Stage of development of a print. Usually a print that is complete enough to print as an edition. States can reflect changes in the matrix.