



60 terms in printmaking

1. Aquatint

an intaglio method using copper or zinc plates. Tonal areas are obtained by using powdered rosin or spray paint. The more powder or spray and the longer the plate is etched, the darker the tone.

2. Artist Proof

a print that is not part of an edition, usually designated as "A.P." when the image is signed. It is a unique print used by the artist to represent how each impression in the edition should look.

3. Baren

a hand-held tool used in relief printmaking to apply pressure to the back of the paper that has been laid over the printing surface. Traditionally used in Japanese printmaking, barens were originally constructed of bamboo and lacquered paper.

4. Bevel

angled or rounded edge of metal plate. Usually visible as an embossed edge around an intaglio image, these slanted edges allow the plate to pass through a printing press without cutting into the dampened paper and press blankets.

5. Brayer

a hand roller used to apply ink to the surface of a print matrix.

6. Burin

an engraving tool used for cutting into wood or metal.

7. Burnisher

a hand tool used to smooth or polish a metal plate in the intaglio process.

8. Chine Collé

a thin sheet of paper that is adhered to a larger, heavier sheet to provide a color or texture behind the printed image.

9. Collograph

a print made by using various collaged materials glued or otherwise secured onto a plate and inking, wiping and printing the plate in the intaglio method.

10. Deckle Edge

the natural uneven edge of a sheet of handmade paper

11. Digital Print

an image printed from a computer (or other digital source) through a mechanical printer.

12. Drypoint

an intaglio method using a copper plate. A drypoint needle is used to draw into the surface of the metal, displacing the metal. This creates a raised burr to the edges of the line. When the plate is inked, the ink catches along the burred edges, creating a soft, velvety line.

13. Edition

the set of identical prints created from a matrix, generally at the same time. The prints are numbered sequentially, also listing the total number of prints made.

14. Embossment

an inkless process in which dampened paper is placed over a plate and run through a press. The result is a three dimensional, raised effect.

15. Engraving

typically an intaglio method using a metal plate. A burin is used to carve a clean line into the metal surface. The plate is then inked, with the ink settling into those recessed areas. The result is a precise linear image.

16. Etching

an intaglio method using a metal plate and acid. The plate is coated with an acid resistant ground and the desired image is drawn onto the surface by scratching the surface with a needle, exposing the metal underneath the ground. The plate is then placed into an acid bath that bites into the exposed surface. Once out of the acid bath, the ground is then removed to prepare the plate for the inking process.

17. Gouge

a tool used to cut into the surface of a wood or linoleum block.

18. Ground

the acid resistant coating used for intaglio processes. It can be soft or hard, using wax, rosin or asphaltum.

19. Hand Transfer

a process used to transfer the inked image from the plate to paper without using a press.

20. Hard Ground

acid-resistant material (wax, rosin, asphaltum) coated onto the surface of a metal plate intended for creating an etching. This surface can be scratched through to expose the metal surface underneath, but it is not so soft as to accept thumbprints or textures from other materials, as in soft ground.

21. Impression

the result of printing an image from the matrix onto a sheet of paper.

22. Ink

Printmaking ink is tackier than paint and is generally slower to dry. Ink can be water or oil based, though most professional artists use oil based for the richness of color and the durability.

23. Intaglio

one of the main printmaking processes. In intaglio printmaking, ink is forced into the recessed lines on a metal plate, which carry the image to be printed. Ink on the surface of the plate is wiped away. Dampened paper is placed over the inked plate and it is then run through a printing press. Intaglio methods include aquatint, drypoint, etching, engraving, and mezzotint.

24. Letterpress

a relief printing press generally used for printing traditional handset type.

25. Limited Edition

indicates a finite number of impressions in an edition of prints and has a bearing in the value of the prints.

26. Linoleum Cut (or Linocut)

a relief printing method from the surface of a carved block of linoleum.

27. Lithography

one of the main printmaking processes. A planographic method of printmaking using a greasy crayon or pencil to draw directly on the surface of a limestone or aluminum plate. Based upon the principle that oil and water repel one another, the surface is treated so that grease-based ink adheres to original grease drawing, while the remainder of the plate remains water-loving and repels ink.

28. Matrix

the plate, block, stone or screen upon which or into which a design or image is created to produce a printed impression.

29. Medium

the method used in creating a work of art. Printmaking media include intaglio, relief, screenprinting, and lithography.

30. Mezzotint

an intaglio method using a copper plate. The entire surface is initially roughened up with a multi-toothed rocker. If printed in this state, ink caught in the surface burs transfers a solid black. In order to create lighter tonal values, a scraper and burnisher are used to smooth out the surface and reduce the amount of ink caught on the surface.

31. Mixed Media

indicates a variety of methods and materials are used in one image.

32. Monoprint

a unique impression pulled from a printing matrix.

33. Monotype

a unique impression created when ink or paint is applied to and transferred from a smooth surface.

34. Multiples

the use of a matrix makes it possible to produce many of the same impression, which makes printmaking different than other two-dimensional media.

35. Numbered Print

To indicate a limited edition, impressions are hand numbered sequentially. For example, "10/30" means that the print is the tenth impression from a total edition of thirty prints.

36. Original Print

an impression typically made by hand through the use of a matrix, by the artist or under his/her supervision. This contrasts with a reproduction, which is machine generated.

37. Paper

Paper is the most common support used for printmaking. Most printmaking paper is acid free and made from cotton rag or another plant fiber. Handmade papers are made using a mold. Laid papers use brass wires in the mold that emboss their mark lightly into the paper. In wove papers, the embossing is not evident because these are mechanically made.

38. Planographic

imagery created from a flat, physically unaffected surface. The main planographic method of printmaking is lithography, which makes microscopic chemical changes to the matrix surface.

39. Plate

a plate is a sheet of metal used as a matrix for printmaking.

40. Plate Tone

the residual ink left after wiping the surface of an intaglio plate that when printed leaves a light tone.

41. Pochoir

a technique that uses stencils to hand color printed images, such as etchings.

42. Print

a print is the impression left as a result of transferring an image from a matrix carrying that image to another material, usually paper.

43. Printing Press

The printing press is a mechanical device used to apply heavy, even pressure to an inked surface to transfer an image to paper. The invention of the printing press in the mid 15th century made it possible to produce multiples of written text, imagery and books.

44. Proof

an impression pulled separate from and usually prior to an edition. Proofs allow the artist to see an image in different states of development and with variations of ink thickness and color.

45. Reduction Print (or reduction block)

a type of relief print that uses the same block for a multiple step printing. As opposed to carving separate blocks to carry individual colors that are layered on the print, in reduction printing the block is printed in one color, then cut and reduced before being printed again in successive colors on the same sheet. The printed area steadily shrinks and defines the layered image with each reduction.

46. Registration

the precise alignment of a matrix on the printing support, especially important when using multiple plates or a reduction block to print the same image.

47. Relief

one of the main printmaking processes. In relief printmaking, the raised areas carry the printed image, and the recessed areas that have been carved away will not print (like a rubber stamp). This process is the oldest and most elemental and does not require a printing press. The main relief methods are woodcut and linocut.

48. Relief Etching

an etched metal plate, usually used for intaglio printing, is inked over the surface only (not into the incised lines) and printed as a relief matrix.

49. Remarque

a small sketch by the artist in the margin of a print or outside the image on a print matrix.

50. Reproduction

a copy of an original artwork. In two-dimensional media, the image is created using a photo-mechanical transference of the original work.

51. Rosin

a resin made from pine trees, rosin is used in etching as a powdered ground for aquatint.

52. Screen Printing (also Silkscreen or Serigraphy)

one of the main printmaking processes. Ink is forced through a silk or synthetic fine mesh screen with a squeegee onto paper or another material below. A stencil adhered to the screen (paper, glue, or other material) blocks ink from passing through the mesh in specific areas corresponding to the planned image.

53. Signed print

a print carrying the signature of the artist or engraver of the image. This is done primarily in pencil after the print is pulled and is intended to identify the print as an original.

54. Soft-Ground

acid-resistant coating for a metal plate that is pliable and tacky, so that objects can be pressed into the ground layer and removed to leave a texture. When the plate is submerged in an acid bath, the texture is then etched

into the exposed plate surface.

55. Solarplate

An intaglio technique that uses water and light instead of acid to bite the plate. A specially prepared light sensitive plate is exposed to U.V. light then developed with water to etch the image into the plate prior to printing.

56. Spitbite

tones etched or “bitten” into an aquatint plate by directly applying acid with a brush or dropper. Water or saliva can be added to the brush to help control the acid.

57. State

a stage in the development of an image, usually represented by a printed proof. A change in state implies that there has been a physical change to the matrix, such as the addition of lines or removal of surface area.

58. Stencil

a cut shape that blocks the transfer of ink or paint. Screen printing uses stencils adhered to a screen.

59. Wood Engraving

a relief method that uses the end grain of a hardwood block instead of the planar surface. Using the short end grains of the wood make it possible to create finer and better controlled linear cuts.

60. Woodcut

a relief method in which a plank of wood is cut or gouged to remove areas of the surface that are not intended to catch and transfer ink. An inked impression reveals the inherent texture and grain of the wood surface, as well as the artist’s marks. This is the oldest known type of printmaking.

| PRINTING PROCESS | DESCRIPTION | METHODS |
|------------------|--|---|
| Relief | Raised areas are printed; negative areas that are not printed are removed by cutting the surface | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodcut (wood plank) • Linocut (linoleum) • Wood engraving (end grain of wood) |
| Intaglio | Cut or removed areas are printed by using pressure from a printing press to force ink in grooves onto paper; surface areas are wiped clean and don't print | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engraving (remove metal by cutting) • Drypoint (displace metal by scratching into surface) • Etching (use ground to coat metal, scratch image into the ground, and remove exposed metal using acid) • Aquatint (use rosin to coat to desired consistency, remove exposed metal using acid) |
| Lithography | A planographic process since nothing is removed; image is drawn on surface of limestone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on principle that oil and water don't mix |
| Screen Printing | Ink is forced through porous material (like silk or fine mesh nylon) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like a stencil • Image printed is not reversed as in other methods • Also called silk screen, or, for fine art prints, serigraphy |