



Ohio Arts Council's Riffe Gallery

A PRINTMAKER'S VOCABULARY LIST

Aquatint

An etching that creates areas of tone, rather than lines. Powdered rosin is sprinkled and melted onto the etching plate prior to being bitten by the etching acid, resulting in a finely textured tonal area. Darkness is determined by the length of time the plate remains in the acid. Most often, it is used in combination with engraving or etching.

Chine Colle'

A process in which small pieces of colored or metallic papers are used instead of, or in combination with colored inks to create a color print. The papers are cut into shapes to fit the areas that need color, and the backs of the papers are painted with glue. While the glue is still wet, the colored papers are placed glue-side-up on top of the appropriate areas of the inked plate. The paper to be printed is placed on top of this and everything is run through the press. The result looks like a collage.

Collagraph

A form of intaglio print in which the printing surface is built up from added materials, as in a collage. They can be created on cardboard, paper, wood, plastic, or any surface that can be run through a printing press.

Collotype

A photomechanical process by which inked reproductions are transferred to paper directly from an image formed on a sheet of hardened gelatin.

Digital Technology

Use of a computer in the creation of a print.

Drypoint

In this process, the artist draws directly on a metal plate with a sharp needle. The displaced metal leaves a burr on either side of the scratched line. It is primarily the ink left in the burr, not the ink remaining in the shallow line, that forms the image on paper. Because the burr wears down quickly with repeated wiping of ink and pressure of the press, only a limited number of prints can be made before the

plate wears out. Dry point lines often are incorporated into etchings and aquatints to add variety of line and texture to the image.

Edition

An edition is a set number of impressions pulled from a matrix. Numbered in sequential order (2/5, 3/5, 4/5 etc.), the editioned print is one of a set that is printed in the same manner each time, on the same size and type of paper. An Artist's Proof (AP) is a print reserved for the artist's use and can be part of a larger, numbered edition. A Unique Print (UP) is a one-of-a-kind print that can be part of a set of variations made from the same matrix.

Embossing

The mark left in the paper by the pressure of a plate or shape when run through the press.

Giclee' Prints

Giclee', pronounced zhee-clay, is a French term that means 'to spurt'. Fine art IRIS Prints, also known as Giclée Prints, are high resolution dye sublimation prints which are the recognized standard for fine art digital printing. Giclee' has become the popular term for ink jet printing.

Intaglio

Any technique in which an image or tone is printed from the lines or textures scratched or etched into a metal plate, usually zinc or copper. This includes engraving, etching, drypoint, and aquatint. The metal plate is covered with ink and then wiped clean with a tarlatan (a starched cloth), leaving ink in the incised lines or textures of the image. The plate is then printed on moistened paper in a press. As the paper is forced into the incised areas of the plate, the image is transferred to the paper.

Letterpress

Typographic printing from movable type.

Matrix

An object upon which a design has been formed, which is then used to make an impression on a piece of paper, creating a print.

Metal Engraving

This is the oldest form of intaglio printing. Lines are incised into a metal plate with a burin (carving tool). The plate is inked, then wiped clean with a cloth, leaving ink only in the furrows created with the burin.

Mezzotint

This extremely difficult process is the inverse of other intaglio processes, because it is created working from black to white. The metal plate is worked with a tool called a rocker, to create a rough, sandpaper-like texture on the surface of the metal plate. If printed at

this point, the image would be solid black. Areas to appear lighter are then smoothed out, or burnished with a metal tool, so that they hold less ink and produce tones of gray and white. The result is a richly textured, almost photographic image.

Mixed Media Print

These prints combine two or more unrelated print processes, such as a woodcut mixed with serigraphy or an intaglio print colored with the use of stencils. In recent years, printmakers have experimented with various combinations to explore new directions. Viscosity prints and Chine-colle are two examples.

Monoprint

An artist paints or draws on a plastic, glass, or metal plate then drops paper onto the plate and runs it through a press. The image can be reapplied to the plate again, but the slight differences between each monoprint make each resulting print unique.

Multiple Plate Etching

This commonly used technique allows an artist to combine and layer color and images by printing more than one plate on the same image area.

Offset Lithography

A painting or other type of original art is photographed and the color image is separated onto four aluminum plates. The image is picked up from these plates by a rubber roller which then reprints (offsets) it onto paper. This is the most common method of commercial printing

Paper Lithography

A photocopied image on paper is treated with Gum Arabic then inked using a roller with oil based ink. The area with toner holds the ink while the negative areas resist, similar to a traditional stone lithograph. Wet or dry paper is then placed on top and the image is transferred either by hand or press.

Photo-Etching

A process involving the transfer of a photographic image to a pre-sensitized etching plate for reproduction. The image is exposed and then developed directly on the plate and then is etched in the regular intaglio fashion.

Photogravure

This complicated technique is the only method for creating a continuous-tone image on an etching plate. The negative, which may be of an artist's drawing or a photograph, is projected onto a sensitized gelatin emulsion or carbon tissue that is transferred onto a copper plate. Areas corresponding to the image on the negative are

dissolved and the plate is aquatinted, then etched in a progression of different strengths of acid.

Photo-Mechanical Print

Types of prints intended to be used as posters, and the common printing processes used for books, magazines, and newspapers are included in this category. Examples of photo-mechanical prints are: Offset lithographs and Giclee' prints.

Planographic Print

A grease crayon or greasy ink is used to create a design that is printed from a flat matrix. Water is washed onto the surface, and then ink is applied, which is held by the greasy image. The image is transferred to paper with the use of a press. Lithographs and collotypes are types of planographic prints.

Plate Tone

Ink left on the plate before printing, to create a subtle texture.

Print

A print is a paper on which a design from a matrix has been transferred

Recto-verso Structure

A process that uses both sides of the paper.

Reduction Woodcut

The same piece of wood is used for printing in multiple colors, with the image being cut away for each new color.

Relief Print

The print is made from a design raised on the surface of the matrix, so the image is created by cutting away the parts that are not to show in the final print. Ink is applied to the surface, paper is placed on top, and the ink is transferred by the application of light pressure. Examples of relief prints: Woodcuts; wood engravings, lino-cuts (linoleum prints); stamped prints.

Silk-Screen or Serigraphy

A form of stencil printing in which the stencil is adhered to a fine screen for support, and ink is then squeegeed through the screen onto the paper.

Stencil Print

A stencil is simply an opening in a material through which ink or paint is applied to a surface underneath, or a solid shape, around which ink or paint is applied. This process, along with offset lithography, is one of only two print processes in which the final image is the same as the matrix. All other printing processes result in a backwards, or mirror

image. Silk-screen prints (serigraphs) are the most common stencil prints.

Stone Lithography

A technique in which an image is drawn in oil-based ink or crayons on a flat slab of limestone which has been chemically treated so that the printing ink, when rolled on to the stone, adheres only where the drawing was done. The inked image is then transferred to a piece of paper with the help of a high pressure press.

Viscosity Printing

Introduced by Stanley William Hayter in Paris in the 1930s, this color technique exploits the resistance between inks of various viscosities, creating multilayered effects. As many as 12 colors on one plate goes through the press only once as opposed to Japanese woodblock printing for example where every color demands a new plate and work might go through the press as many as 16 times.

Woodcut

A relief print in which the image is carved on a block of wood, cutting away all parts that are not to hold ink. The surface is inked with a roller and printed. A sheet of paper is laid on the inked plank, and can be rubbed from the back with a smooth surface, such as a wooden spoon, or run through a press to create the image.

Wood Engraving

Traditionally a commercial technique because of its ability to produce thousands of finely detailed prints, a relief print is carved in the end grain of a block of boxwood. Because boxwood does not grow very large, wood engravings are usually small. Little or none of the wood texture is seen in the print.