

## **HELPFUL PRINTMAKING TERMS**

### **blindstamp**

A colorless impression that is embossed without ink onto a print. It is a distinguishing mark for the artist or owner. Blind stamps are usually quite unobtrusive, although careful inspection may reveal quite a decorative image.

### **chop**

Each publication bears an embossed, dry-stamped, or printed form of a chop. It is generally placed adjacent to the artist's signature and is accompanied by a copyright mark.

### **edition**

This is the body of prints or sculpture essentially identical to the right to print impression or standard used for the edition or prototype. Two numbers are used in the signing procedure: the upper number follows a consecutive sequence beginning with 1 through the total in the edition (example: 3/25); the lower number indicates the total number of pieces in the edition.

### **print**

Prints are works of art produced in editions or multiple original impressions of the same image. They are made by transferring a layer of ink from a printing element, or matrix, onto paper or another material. A printing press frequently supplies the pressure for the transfer. The various printmaking techniques are defined by the type of matrix and the manner in which it carries ink. Complex color prints may call for several matrices, and more than one process may be used for a single print.

## **PRINTMAKING PROCESSES**

### **archival pigment print**

Artworks that are made with an ultra-high-resolution fine-art printer, using the very finest archival inks and papers.

### **aquatint**

An intaglio technique that produces effects similar to a watercolor wash, creating both even tones and/or tones with gradation or blending effects. The process entails adhering fine particles of resin to a metal plate as an acid resist. After the plate has been treated in an acid bath, the acid-resistant material is removed. The resulting etched, or bitten, surface is composed of textured areas rather than lines. Aquatint is often used in combination with other intaglio techniques.

### **collagraph**

A print made from a plate collaged with different textures. A base plate of mountcard or the reverse side of old etching plates can be used. The process is a combination of intaglio and relief.

### **drypoint**

An intaglio technique in which the line is scratched directly into the copper plate with a sharp metal point, traditionally a dry point needle. As the needle scores the copper, it creates a ridge of metal known as the burr on both sides of the line, thus holding the ink and printing as a rich velvety line.

### **engraving**

An intaglio technique in which a metal plate is manually incised with a burin, an engraving tool with a V-shaped metal shaft. Depending on the angle and degree of pressure with which they were scooped out of the metal (usually copper) plate, the incised lines may vary in width and darkness when printed. The result is a very steady and considered line, with crisp edges where the burin has cut through the metal.

### **etching**

An intaglio technique whereby marks are bitten into the metal plate by chemical action. The plate is coated with a ground (either hard or softground) impervious to acid through which the artist draws to expose the metal. The plate is then

immersed in an acid bath until the open lines of areas are sufficiently bitten. Finally, the ground is removed and the plate inked and printed. Etching is commonly used in combination with drypoint, aquatint, and other intaglio processes.

### **intaglio**

A printing process in which the image is manually incised or chemically etched into a metal plate using a variety of techniques and tools. The paper receives the ink from the incised recessed marks and not from the top surface of the plate, as in relief printing. For intaglio printing the paper is dampened so that it will be squeezed under printing pressure into the inked recesses of the plate. One of the distinguishing characteristics of this type of printing is that the dried ink impression stands up from the paper in very slight relief. Aquatint, engraving, etching, mezzotint, and drypoint are intaglio techniques.

### **linecut**

A commercial method of relief printing used in newsprint illustration for many years. Non-image areas are removed from a metal plate by techniques such as acid etching or cutting with tools. A linecut, which is generally produced photographically, consists of solid areas of black and white rather than halftone dots.

### **lithography**

A printing process based on the antipathy of grease and water. The printing elements used are limestone and aluminum or zinc plates, grained to varying degrees of roughness. The image can be produced by photochemical and transfer processes, or be drawn using lithographic crayons and pencils, tusche, chalk, and various grease, lacquer, or synthetic materials. The stone is then washed with a solution, thus chemically producing water-receptive non-printing areas and grease-receptive image areas. The drawing grease is cleaned from the printing surface. A roller bearing greasy printing ink is then rolled over the surface, with the ink adhering only to drawn grease-receptive image areas. Finally, paper is laid on top of the stone or plate, which is passed through a lithography press for transfer. Lithography is often described as a surface or planographic printing process in order to distinguish it from the relief and intaglio processes.

### **mezzotint**

An intaglio method in which the artist works from dark to light. The plate is systematically roughened with a spurlike tool called a rocker. If inked in this state, it will print a velvety black. Graduated highlights are then smoothed out by scraping and burnishing the plate. Mezzotint is often combined with other intaglio methods.

### **monoprint**

A print that has been altered by coloring the paper before printing or by varying each impression during or after printing. A monoprint derives all or part of its image from printing elements and may include collage elements and/or hand-coloring.

### **monotype**

A unique image printed from a plate, glass, metal, or other material on which an image is painted or drawn. A monotype impression is one of a kind. However, a second, lighter impression, called a ghost, can be made from the painted or drawn printing element.

### **offset lithography**

A modern development of lithography in which the image is lifted from the stone or plate by a rubber roller which then reprints it onto paper. An advantage of this double printing procedure is that it re-reverses the image, which is then printed in its original direction.

### **photoengraving**

A process for making relief plates by using acid to etch away the non-printing areas of a photographically produced image. The subject is photographed through a wire or glass screen, which breaks the light in a way that sensitizes the metal plate in a dotted pattern. Darker areas are created with larger dots while highlights are rendered with finer dots. When printed, the finest screens create the most precise detail. This process was used principally for reproducing illustrations in the earlier part of the 20th century.

### **photoetching**

An intaglio process in which the etching plate is coated with a light-sensitive acid-resistant ground and exposed, through a dot screen, to a photographic image. A "negative" resist dissolves in the areas that are exposed to light, while hardening in

areas not exposed to it. Thus pits are etched and ink is held in the areas that appear light in the photographic image. A positive resist dissolves where it is not exposed to light.

#### **photogravure**

A process using a bichromated gelatin tissue on a copper plate. The exposed and selectively hardened layer controls the penetration of an etching solution, so that the printing plate is etched to different depths. After inking, the plate is printed in the usual intaglio manner.

#### **photolithography**

A form of lithography in which light-sensitive plates or stones are exposed to a photographic image, usually by means of a halftone screen.

#### **photoseriagraph**

A form of seriagraph in which a light-sensitive resist applied to the screen is exposed to a photographic image that has been broken down by a dot screen. Areas exposed to light harden. A photo stencil is created when unexposed sections, which are unaffected, are washed away. The ink is forced through the open mesh to create the image.

#### **relief printing**

A printing process in which the impression is created by the uncarved or raised areas of the printing element. The ink is applied to the raised surface, while the incised or recessed areas remain clear. During printing, paper is often pushed into the sunken areas thus creating an embossed effect. Wood, linoleum, and plastic are most commonly used for relief printing.

#### **serigraph**

A print made by a stencil technique in which ink is forced through stretched mesh fabric (silk, cotton, nylon, or metal) onto paper beneath the frame. The image is created by blocking out parts of the mesh in a variety of ways such as hand-painting the screen with glue or lacquer; applying a cutout design; or by painting a light-sensitive resist on the screen which is then developed photographically. Unlike many of the other printing media, there is no mirror reversal in serigraphing, which is very versatile as it can be placed on almost any material.

#### **spitbite**

A direct intaglio method of painting the grounded etching plate with a strong acid rather than placing it in an acid-bath. Pale to dark tones can be achieved by varying the time and strength of the acid application. The term originated with the traditional practice of putting saliva on the plate to mix with the acid in order to control the dispersal of the fluid over the plate.

#### **woodcut**

A method of relief printing in which wood is the printing element. The artist's design is either drawn directly on the block of wood or on a sheet of paper that is adhered to its surface. A variety of cutting tools can be used to carve away the non-printing areas. When finished, the image will appear as a network of lines and shapes standing out in relief, which are then inked and printed.

#### **wood-engraving**

A particular form of woodcut developed in the late eighteenth century. A very hard wood is used, which is end grain rather than the plank wood normally used for woodcuts. As a consequence, a graver, which is similar to the burin used in engraving, is used instead of a knife. The close grain of the woodblock allows the engraver to cut very fine lines, thereby creating images with much greater detail than is possible in woodcut.

### **PROOFS**

#### **AP**

Artist's proof. A proof that meets the right to print impression or standard used for the edition but is retained apart from the edition by the artist or publisher.

**CTP**

Color trial proof. Generally, these proofs have the same printing elements as those in the edition. However, they may deviate from the edition through a sequence or color variance, or through added or deleted elements as in the trial proof. A color trial proof may have been pulled at any time during the proofing period or during the printing of the edition. They are signed if the artist feels they are a unique and desirable variation. There is often an overlap in intent between trial proof and the color trial proof.

**HC**

Hors de commerce. An impression pulled outside the edition. Not intended for sale, it is designated for the artist's or publisher's use. An entire edition may be printed for this purpose.

**PC**

Publisher's copy. The copy of a three-dimensional object, similar in nature to an artist's proof, which is retained by the publisher.

**PP**

Progressive proof. A series of proofs intended to illustrate the image development of the completed print showing each color or element as added one by one.

**PP II**

Printer's proof II. A proof presented to a printer who assisted in printing the edition. Additional proofs beyond a printer's proof II may exist and are indicated by Roman numerals (PP II, PP III, PP IV, etc.).

**PPII**

Producer's proof II. A copy of a three-dimensional object that meets the prototype. It is generally presented to a fabricator who assisted in the proofing period and during production of the edition.

**PR**

Presentation proof. A proof meeting the right to print impression or standard used for the edition that is intended as a gift to a group or individual

**proof**

Impressions pulled before the printing of the edition in which the development of the image is tracked and various inks, colors, papers, and other variables are tested.

**RTP**

Right to produce. A copy of a three-dimensional object that equals the prototype. It is generally presented to the fabricator with whom the artist collaborated.

**SP**

Special proof. A proof specifically created for presentation purposes by the artist or publisher that equals the right to print impression or standard used for the edition. In some cases this is called a dedication proof (DP).

**TP**

Trial proof. This impression varies from the edition either in imagery, printing sequence, or fabrication.

**WP**

Working proof. This impression is one upon which the artist has added work by hand.

**TECHNIQUES****chine collé**

A method that uses glue during the printing process in order to adhere a thin, often Japanese, sheet of paper to a heavier

sheet. The fragile paper is able to take a finer impression than the more substantial paper beneath. In contemporary prints, chine collé is often used for purely aesthetic purposes, exploiting the visual qualities of the collé paper rather than its ability to reproduce fine impressions.

**collage**

A technique that incorporates fragments of commercially printed paper into compositions. Introduced into fine art by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso circa 1909, collage was later developed by artists of the Dada and Surrealist movements to include found objects. Today any material fixed to a surface may be termed collage.

**debossing**

An inverted form of embossing in which a relief plate is placed under the sheet of paper as it is run through a press, thus lowering rather than raising that area of the paper.

**embossing**

An inkless process that can use multiple techniques--e.g. etching, stamping, carving, or casting--to create the matrix. The paper is subsequently forced into the matrix, often using a press, in order to create three-dimensional effects.

**flocking**

A printing process in which short fibers of rayon, cotton, wool or another natural or synthetic material are applied to an adhesive-coated surface. This adds a velvet or suede-like texture to the surface. Since the fibers can be dyed, flocking can also add a color to a printed area.

**gravure**

A variant of photogravure without use of a camera. The artist draws an image on a plastic film such as Mylar for photographic transfer to the plate.

**tusche**

A drawing medium manufactured in liquid and solid states, made from similar ingredients such as lithographic crayons and pencils. Litho tusche can be diluted in water, turpentine, or other solvents to produce a liquid medium for drawing on stone, aluminum plates, transfer paper, acetate, or Mylar. Tusche is also used in creating hand-drawn serigraph stencils.