

THECHURCH

Master Impressions: Artists and Printers on the South Fork (1965-2010)
January 14th – February 25th, 2024

Glossary

Aquatint

An *etching* technique used to create tones. A *ground* of acid-resistant powdered resin, spray paint, or other substance is applied to a metal plate and heated, creating a porous surface. When the plate is placed in an acid bath, the acid eats into the areas not covered by resin. When inked, the result is a textured tone. Lightness or darkness of tone depends on the amount of time is exposed to the acid.

Burin

A metal tool, also called a graver, consisting of a steel shaft with a sharp square – or wedge-shaped head used for *engraving* metal plates

Burnishing

A method of smoothing the surface of a metal plate with a curved and polished metal tool (burnisher). Burnishing eliminates recessed marks from a plate and creates highlights in tones. The process is often preceded by scraping indentations off a plate's surface with a *scraper*.

Burr

A ridge of metal left when a *burin* or *drypoint* tool is moved across the surface of a metal plate. In *mezzotint*, burr refers to the even ridges produced by the serrated teeth of a rocker.

Counter Etching

The removal of the etch which fixes the image on a lithographic surface.

Drypoint

An *intaglio* process in which lines are cut into the surface of a plate with a pointed instrument – a fine needle or scribing tool. The cut of the needle creates a ridge of metal called a burr. In printing, the burr holds the ink and yields a soft fuzzy line.

Edition

Any set number of *impressions* printed from the same plate; usually numbered.

Engraving

An *intaglio* process in which a *burin* is used to incise lines into a plate. Curves are created by turning the plate as the line is being engraved. If a *burr* is created, it is removed with a *scraper*. The depth of an engraved line depends on the angle and pressure with which the burin is moved across the plate. This, in turn, yields printed lines of varying width and darkness.

Etching

An *intaglio* process based on the chemical reaction of acid on metal. The plate is first coated with an acid-resistant ground and lines are drawn through the ground, exposing the plate. When the plate is placed in an acid bath, the area eats or "bites" away the exposed areas to create the image.

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Ground (Hard Ground)

An acid-resistant coating used to cover etching plates. When the ground hardens, the etcher cuts through it to the plate with a pointed tool. See also *soft-ground*.

Impression

A print made directly from an inked stone, plate, or wood-block.

Intaglio

Derived from the Italian *intagliare* ("to engrave" or "carve into"). Intaglio is the generic term for recessed printing techniques, including *etching*, *engraving*, *aquatint*, *drypoint*, and *mezzotint*. When an intaglio plate is inked and wiped, the recessed lines hold ink. The pressure of the printing press forces the inked lines onto the paper. The lines created are raised off the paper's surface.

Lithography

Invented by Alois Senefelder in 1797, lithography "stone drawing" is a planographic or "surface" process that involves no cutting into or away from the surface of the plate. Lithography depends on the apathy of grease and water. The image is drawn with greasy tusche ink or litho crayon onto a slab of limestone or an aluminum plate. The printing surface is then treated with a solution of gum Arabic and nitric acid, called an etch, which stabilizes the image. Before printing, the surface is sponged with water, then rolled with a greasy ink. Wet areas repel the ink, but the tusche or crayon marks hold it and yield the printed image.

Matrix

Any material, such as a stone, screen, or metal plate, upon which a design is created for the purpose of transfer. In prints involving more than one color, a separate matrix is usually drawn for each color. However, multiple colors may be simultaneously printed from a single matrix and used many times for different colors.

Mezzotint

An *intaglio* technique first popularized in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. Mezzotint ("half-tone") is a means of creating images out of tones. The surface of the plate is first roughened with a rocker, a tool with an even, serrated edge, to create an overall *burr* which prints as a dark velvety black. The lines and areas to be lightened are smoothed down by scraping or *burnishing* so that they do not take the ink in printing.

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.

Planographic

Planographic printing means printing from a flat surface, as opposed to a raised surface (as with *relief* printing) or incised surface (as with *intaglio* printing). *Monotypes* and *lithographs* are both examples of planographic prints.

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Proof

An *impression* taken at any stage in the making of a print.

Artist's Proof

Impressions made outside the numbered edition made especially for the artist, usually marked "A.P.," "artist's proof," or with Roman numerals to distinguish them from the numbered edition.

Trial Proof

An impression taken in the process of creating an image, often incorporating new revisions to the plate or stone.

Working Proof

A trial proof in which the artist has added work by hand.

Cancellation Proof

An impression taken from a plate, often marked with an X to designate the end of an edition.

Registration

The strategy used to align *matrices* when printing from several plates, stones, screens, or blocks. Each must print precisely in the correct location to form a coherent image.

Relief

A printing process in which the impression is created by the uncarved or raised areas of the *matrix*. 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.

Scraper

A triangle-shaped, rough-surfaced steel tool used in the marking of *intaglio* plates for removing *burrs* or indentations from the surface of the plate. In *lithography*, a scraper refers to the leather bar under which the stone passes that applies pressure to force the ink onto the paper.

Screenprint

Also called a serigraph; the term refers to an image produced by a stencil process. Ink is passed through a stencil made of fabric or wire. A separate screen or stencil is used for each color required.

Snakeslip

An abrasive stick, made of pressed pumice, used like a scraper to erase marks from a lithographic stone.

Soft-ground

An *etching* technique in which an acid-resistant pliable ground is applied to the plate. A sheet of paper is then laid over it and the artist draws firmly, usually with a pencil, making clear impressions in the ground. When the paper is lifted off, the marked areas of the ground pull away with it. The plate is then bitten with acid as in an etching. A soft-ground etched line can simulate the effect of a chalk or pencil line.

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State

Every revision of a plate, block, or stone from which one or more *impressions* are pulled is called a state. States are frequently numbered, in the order of execution, to differentiate them from the final version.

Sugar-lift

An *etching ground* made of sugar, ink (litho or India), and water. With a brush or pen dipped in sugar-lift ground, an artist draws directly onto a bare metal or aquatinted plate. The plate is then covered with a hard etching ground. After the hard ground dries, the plate is soaked in warm water. The sugar's dissolution in water lifts the ground off the plate. The exposed areas are then etched.

White Ground

White ground aquatint, also known as soap ground, is a technique in which the artist paints with a ground made of soap, fat and white pigment directly onto a plate already prepared with an *aquatint*. The soap ground is a semi-permeable resist, which means that acid will penetrate it slowly. When exposed to acid, the soap ground will protect the plate depending on how thickly it has been applied, longer where it is thicker, and shorter where it is thinner, resulting in a wide range of tonal values in the print.

Woodcut

A *relief* process, the oldest in printmaking technique, in which wood is the *matrix*. In a woodcut, the lines or area to be printed are left standing in relief. 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.