

Glossary of terms - Printmaking

Acetate Clear plastic sheet used for registering plates, blocks and to create monotypes and stencils

Aquatint Aquatint is a printmaking technique that produces tonal effects by using acid to eat into the printing plate creating sunken areas which hold the ink

Baren Hand tool used to firmly rub the back of the sheet of paper in order to pick up ink from the lino

Blotting paper A loosely sized paper that is very absorbent. Used to remove excessive moisture from dampened paper before printing. Layered under drying (pressing) boards to aid the even drying of newly printed works.

Bridge A support for the hand. Generally made of wood. Used in intaglio to keep the hand away from the plate when drawing into soft ground.

Chine Colle Traditionally, the printing of an image on a very light, delicate paper that is then adhered to a stronger, supporting paper. The application of colour using coloured paper rather than the use of ink on multiple plates or through the a la poupee technique.

CMYK Cyan, magenta and yellow, and black. The four colours in the halftone printing system.

Collagraph A technique of relief printing using any combination of actual elements such as cardboard, fabric, washes, carborundum (an abrasive powder), or found objects, which are adhered to a plate, inked, and printed

Cyanotype Known as a blueprint cyanotype was a process discovered with the advent of photography. The print is Prussian blue in colour and made by exposing an object or a negative in contact with prepared paper to the sun or an ultra violet light source. The paper is then simply washed under running water and allowed to dry

Drypoint An intaglio technique where lines are scratched directly into the plate, without the use of acid. The burr thrown up by the needle gives the print a velvety appearance

Emulsion Casting of light-sensitive chemicals on papers, films, printing plates and stencils

Engraving A printing method using a plate with an image cut into its surface

Etch To carve an image into metal, glass or film

Extender White or colourless pigment matter used with ink to add body, and or increase coverage

Ghost Print A print taken from the plate as a second print without re-inking

Gum Arabic A substance from the acacia tree, used for lithographic etches and often as a binder in water-based pigments.

Halftone A reproduction of a photograph or other image in which the various tones of grey or colour are produced by variously sized dots of ink

Intaglio Intaglio describes any printmaking technique in which the image is produced by incising into the printing plate – the incised line or area holds the ink and creates the image

Letterpress A relief technique for printing movable type (though blocks with images may also be used). Metal, wood, or polymer forms of a standard height are set in place in the bed of a press. Since ink is transferred from the surface of the blocks by the application of pressure, letterpress prints are recognizable for their embossed printed forms.

Lino Linoleum, a flooring material made of linseed oil and cork dust on a hessian support.

Lioncut A linocut is a relief print produced in a manner similar to a woodcut but that uses linoleum as the surface into which the design is cut and printed from

Monoprint The monoprint is a form of printmaking where the image can only be made once, unlike most printmaking which allows for multiple originals

Monotype A unique image printed from a polished plate, such as glass or metal, which has been painted with a design in ink.

Newsprint Cheap, thin paper used for proofing.

Proof An inked impression pulled from an inked plate, block, stone, or screen.

Reduction print Achieved by the gradual cutting away of the wood or lino block following the printing of each colour.

Register Marks Fine crosses or T marks, drawn or printed in the opposite margins of a print as a guide to registration.

Register Multiple printed images in correct alignment upon the surface of the paper

Registration Correct placement of an image on a previously printed image on the same print

Relief Carving Tools Tools, such as chisels and knives, used to carve into a matrix of wood or linoleum.

Scoop coater a tool for applying photosensitive emulsion to a silkscreen

Screen Printing Screen Printing is a time-tested stencilling technique used to apply inked images to a wide variety of substrates. Using a stencil, or a series of stencils, the ink is distributed to the desired area(s) by being pressed through a porous screen, hence the name Screen Printing

Screen The frame and stretched mesh used in screen-printing. In photomechanical work, the glass sheet or acetate film used to create half tones and mechanical tints

Scrim In Intaglio, a stiff, relatively loosely woven canvas used when wiping ink from a plate before printing.

Squeegee A plastic or rubber blade in a holder, used to force ink through the mesh in screen-printing

Stencil A sheet of thin paper, metal, or plastic with open areas through which ink is brushed, rolled or squeegeed, to print an image

Wiping In intaglio, the removal of ink from the surface of the plate after inking up, leaving the ink only in the detail