

# THE LANGUAGE OF ART

## GENERAL ART TERMS

**Acid-Free** Art paper with a 7 pH (ideal); above 8.5 pH or below 6.5 pH is not considered acid-free. Used as backing board & matting to achieve archival framing.

**Antiquing** Using a glaze of burnt or raw umber over a work of art to create an appearance of age.

**Aquarelle** (pron. ak-we-RELL) Transparent watercolor.

**Arches (D'Arches)** Trade name of a popular 100% rag watercolor paper made in France; available in weights of 72, 90, 140, 300, 400, and 550 lbs, as well as different textures-hot press (smooth), cold press (medium rough) and rough.

**Assemblage** Sculpture formed by joining individual pieces, often "found objects".

**Atmospheric** Term used to describe a soft landscape or scene, diffused image.

**Bas-relief** FR. "low relief", (pron. BAH relief) Sculpture in which the figure projects only slightly from the background.

**Bleed (1)** Paint or ink that runs into an adjoining area or up through coats of paint; usually undesirable. **(2)** Full bleed image continues to edge of paper.

**Burnisher** A tool used to smooth, flatten, or polish. Available in different sizes and materials. Often used for gold or silver leafing.

**Casein** A binder made from casein glue, a milk derivative; combined with pigments, it resembles opaque watercolor and is used on paper or board for light impasto, for underpainting, wall decoration, etc. but is too inflexible for canvas; dries quickly with a waterproof surface and may be varnished.

**Catalogue raisonné** (Fr. "*reasoned catalogue*"; pron. catalog re-zo-NAY) Complete descriptive listing of an artist's work.

**Chi hua** (Chinese) A painting made by using fingers and finger nails in place of brushes.

**Chinoiserie** (French, Chinese things) European style of decoration that was inspired by Chinese art, beginning in the 16th century.

**Chop Mark** A signature or identifying mark impressed on paper, often used by commercial printers and workshops, as well as artists.

**Cloisonné** A form of enamel decoration in which metal lines separate the colors.

**Collage** (pron. co-LAZH) A work made by gluing pieces of paper, fabric, etc., on to a flat surface.

**Deckle, Deckled Edge** The decorative torn edge on art paper.

**Diptych** (pron. DIP-tick) A two part painting, often of attached panels and continuous image.

**Dry Mounting** A method of attaching a print, drawing, or photograph to a cardboard

backing by placing a sheet of dry mounting tissue between the artwork and the cardboard and then applying heat for adhesion.

**Encaustic Painting** A method of painting with hot wax mixed with pigment, difficult to control but extremely durable.

**Figurative** A painting depicting a human figure (s), more real than abstract. Representational.

**Fine Art** Art primarily produced for the artist's satisfaction rather than for direct commercial purposes; does not necessarily denote quality.

**Found Object** A natural object incorporated into a work of art. Often refers to recycled or reclaimed materials used in art.

**Gel** A transparent oil color medium, packaged in tube form, used to alter the viscosity and elastic quality of paint for ease of handling, drying time, and certain effects.

**Gesso** A white primer used as a base for painting canvas, wood, Masonite, etc, can be textured or sanded smooth.

**Gestural Drawing** a way of drawing action or movement, generally of a figure or object in motion.

**Glaze** a transparent layer of paint mixed with a medium, applied over a dry area, allowing the underpainting to show through.

**Gouache** (pron. gwash) Watercolor to which an opaque white has been added.

**Haute Relief** (Fr. "high relief"; pron. O relief) High sculptural relief in which figures project from a background at least half their real depth.

**Impasto** A thick application of paint creating a textured surface.

**Labored** Overworked; said of artwork that has lost a feeling of spontaneity.

**Life Drawing** Drawing of the human figure; usually refers to drawing from a nude model.

**Lucite** Trade name for a clear acrylic/plexi sheet with many uses.

**Maquette** In sculpture, a small, rough model, used as a guide for the larger piece; also called a *bozzetto*.

**Mixed Media** Two or more mediums used in one picture, such as transparent watercolor and gouache, or pencil and ink wash.

**Original** An authentic work of art conceived and produced solely by the artist.

**Painterly** Appearing free in style or technique, with more use of mass than of line; having the effect of spontaneous, expert paint application.

**Panel** In painting, a section of wood, Masonite, plywood, or other hardboard, used in place of stretched canvas.

**Pastel** A soft chalk made of pigments, water, and a binder, blended into a stiff paste and dried.

**Plein Air** (French, *open air*) Term applied since about 1850 to artists who paint scenes outdoors directly from observation.

**Provenance** The history of a work of art, its origin and collectors; records kept to help assure authenticity and forestall forgery.

**Quire** Twenty-five sheets of paper, or 1/20 of a ream

**Rag** paper made exclusively from cloth refers to 100% acid free.

**Retrospective** A review of a large body of work produced during an artist's lifetime.

**Still Life** Inanimate objects such as flowers and fruit, arranged as a model for a composition to be painted, photographed, etc.

**Suite** A group of images, usually related in subject matter.

**Tempera** Originally a pigment ground with egg emulsion, that dries hard and quickly and is very permanent.

**Tole** Painted tinware; a decorative folk art of painting on tin trays, lamps, and other household items with designs, borders, etc.

**Trompe l'oeil** (French, deception of the eye) Painting rendered with photographic realism, so realistic it can fool the viewer into thinking the subjects are real rather than painted.

**Triptych** A panel painting in three parts, a middle section with two wings; often used for altarpieces.

**Viscosity** The degree of thickness in paint or ink.

**Watermark** A translucent name or design molded into paper during the manufacturing process; more visible when held to a light.

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## PRINT TERMINOLOGY

**Artist proof (A.P.)** A print outside of the numbered series, usually 1/10 of the edition.

**Acquaint** An *intaglio* method in which areas of color are made by dusting powdered resin on a metal plate and then letting acid eat the plate surface away from around it.

**Bed** On a printing press, the surface that establishes the maximum usable sheet size.

**Bon-a-tirer** (FR. "Good to pull"; pron. bone-ah-ti-RAY) The first impression of a print run acceptable to the artist and used as the standard with which each subsequent impression is compared.

**Cancellation Proof** A proof made from a canceled plate or stone to show that no more prints can be pulled; usually a large X is drawn on the plate before the final proof.

**Dry Point** An *intaglio* technique like engraving in which the image is drawn on a metal plate with a needle, raising a ridge which prints a soft line.

**Edition** the number of prints, such as lithographs or etchings, pulled from the original stone or plate; each print identified by the artist according to the total number and the sequence in which they were pulled.

**Embossed print** Un-inked relief print in which dampened paper is pressed into recessed areas of a plate to produce a three-dimensional impression.

**Engraving** An *intaglio* process in which lines are cut into a metal plate and then filled with ink to transfer the image onto paper.

**Etching** An *intaglio* process of creating a design on the surface of a metal or other plate with a needle, and using a mordant to bite out the design.

**Giclee** the process of making fine art prints from a digital source using ink-jet printing. A french word literally meaning a "spray of ink".

**Graphic** Any work printed directly on paper from a plate or block.

**Hors de commerce** (H.C.) (Fr. "Outside of sale", pron. OR de com-AIRCE) A designation for prints not in the numbered series pulled for the use of the publisher, normally limited to five or six.

**Intaglio** (Ital. "INcision", pron. in-TAHL-y) Any technique in which an image is incised below the surface of the plate.

**Limited Edition** In graphic arts, a limited number of prints, determined by the artists, that are pulled from a plate and numbered, after which the plate is destroyed.

**Linocut** A process in which an image is cut in relief on a linoleum block.

**Linoleum block** A piece of wood with battleship linoleum

mounted to the surface, cut and inked to make a block print called a linoleum cut or linocut.

**Lithograph** A *planographic* process in which images are drawn with crayon or a greasy ink on stone or metal and then transferred to paper.

**Lithography, offset** A term applied to printing by offset press in which the image is transferred to the plate by a photographic process.

**Mezzotint** An *intaglio* process in which the plate surface is roughened by smoothing the areas to be printed.

**Monotype** A unique print made from an inked, painted glass or metal plate. Signed one of one.

**Original Print** A print pulled under the artist's control in graphic arts, not a mechanical or photographic reproduction.

**Photogravure** A commercial *intaglio* printing process using plates or cylinders, known for its quality in halftone and color reproduction.

**POD** Print on Demand, common term for high quality printing one off digital prints (giclees from an existing digital file).

**Plate Mark** In printmaking, the mark of the edges of the plate that are left on the paper.

**Relief** A technique in which the portions of a plate intended to print are raised above the surface, as *woodcut*, *linocut*, etc.

**Restrike** A print produced from the matrix of an original print but which was not printed as part of

the original publishing venture or as part of a connected, subsequent publishing venture. A later impression from an unrelated publishing project.

**Roman numbered edition** A smaller edition numbered with Roman numerals, usually a deluxe edition on higher quality paper.

**Serigraphy** (screen-printing, silkscreen) A stenciling method in which the image is transferred to paper by forcing ink through a fine mesh in which the background has been blocked.

**Signed and numbered** Authenticated with the artist's signature, the total number of impressions in the edition, and usually the order in which the impression is signed; "5/20" indicates that the print is the fifth signed of an edition of 20 impressions.

**Tintype** In photography, the process of developing a direct positive image on a lightweight metal plate.

**Woodcut** A process in which an image is cut in relief on a wood block.