

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 raisonne (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.

Cloisonne 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.

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.