

Artist
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DEFINITION FINE ART PRINT or ORIGINAL PRINT

Frequently, a person visiting this site may be unfamiliar with the difference between an *Original Print* or *Fine Art Print* and other commercial prints. A Rembrandt or Goya etching or a Dürer woodcut are fine art prints, considerably different from a reproduction made from a photograph or other means. We are providing what we believe to be an accepted definition of original and fine art prints, terms which we use interchangeably. We will also define some of the types of fine art prints.

An artist produces an original print because it is the **only way to achieve the image** the artist is seeking. An original print is as different from an oil painting as a sculpture. Artists choose a technique such as sculpting, painting with oil, acrylic, watercolor or pastel or one of the printmaking techniques to achieve a particular result. An original or fine art print is simply the outcome of choosing a printmaking technique to produce the image.

If an artist wants the tactile quality of a three-dimensional image, one of the best ways to achieve it is through sculpture. A landscape seldom lends itself to sculpture so, frequently, it is painted using oil, acrylic, watercolor or pastel or printed using one of the printmaking techniques. Artists produce images which give visual dimensions, not usually available to the eye, images which are achieved as a result of the artist's perception coupled with the artist's choice of method or medium. When printmaking is the method chosen, the result is an original print. Within printmaking, there are many techniques and mediums.

An image on one material transferred to another material is called a print. An original image created on a surface which can be stone, wood, metal, linoleum, cardboard, silk screen material, plexiglass, and other materials and then transferred to another material, usually paper, is called an *Original Print*. An *Original Print* or *Fine Art Print* is a work of graphic art produced from an image **worked by the artist** on another material, usually a metal or plastic plate. This is substantially different from reproductions, prints made by an electro-mechanical or mechanical process using photographic or digital images which may be taken from an artist's original work of art.

An original print usually is limited to an edition of 10 to 250 prints since the work is labor intensive, sometimes requiring as much as one day per print after the image has been produced. Larger editions usually result from a collaboration between an artist and a print workshop. In these collaborations, the artist works in the workshop until the desired result has been achieved and then the process, techniques and results developed are carried out by the workshop under the artist's supervision.

PRINT TYPES

- **INTAGLIO** - Intaglio is a process in which the image is obtained by pulling the ink out of the grooves and pits lower than the surface of a metal or plexiglass plate. The grooves and pits may be formed by any method including scratching (drypoint), etching (acid action), or incising (engraving). Thick ink is forced into the grooves and pits and the high surface areas are carefully wiped clean. Damp paper is placed on the surface of the plate and both are run

through a press under great pressure, pulling the ink out of the depressions in the plate. This painstaking inking and wiping process is repeated for each color and for each print.

- **RELIEF** - A relief print is the opposite of an intaglio. In a relief print, the image is taken from the surface and the grooves and pits are ink free. Woodcuts, wood engravings, relief etchings and linoleum cuts are relief techniques in which the artist cuts or etches away the lines and areas which are not to be inked for the finished print. For these prints, a thin layer of ink is rolled on the surface of the plate or block. For a collograph print, an artist uses miscellaneous materials inked on the surfaces to make the relief print. In a relief print, the paper is placed on the surface and the ink is transferred to it by rubbing the paper with a wooden spoon or a Japanese Baren, or by running the paper and plate, block or collographic image through a press.
- **STENCIL** (serigraph, silk screen) - In a serigraph or silk screen print, finely woven, sheer fabric is stretched over a frame to form a screen. Non-image areas are blocked out or clogged, and ink is forced through the open areas of the screen with a squeegee to the paper which is directly positioned beneath the open mesh of the screen. This basic process is varied by the artist depending on the effect the artist wants to achieve.
- **MONOTYPE** - A monotype is a print made without a repeatable matrix. Without this matrix, any similar prints made are not an exact duplicate of the image. Artists are working this way because of the expressive qualities and the color possibilities available through this method. One way to produce a monotype is to apply ink with a roller or a brush to the surface of a metal or plexiglass plate. The ink is manipulated with fingers, Q-tips, rags, etc. to create the image. Some artists apply all colors and complete the image for one press run. Other artists prefer to use multiple layers of transparent ink and make many press runs.
- **MONOPRINT** - A monoprint begins with a repeatable matrix of the image. Although the matrix could allow an edition of like impressions, a monoprint is made singular through subsequent hand coloring or doctoring, resulting in a uniquely different or a one-of-a kind print. A series of monoprints--all derived from the same plate, but then individually hand manipulated--is often called a unique edition and is signed and numbered accordingly.
- **LITHOGRAPH** - Lithography is a direct printing method which utilizes the antipathy of water and grease. A drawing is made directly on thick limestone, or a zinc or paper plate with a greasy pencil, crayon or ink (tusche). The tusche may be diluted with solvents and brushed on in washes to produce tones from light to very dark. When the drawing is completed, the stone is processed with gum arabic and acids, making the open areas hydrophilic (water loving) and the image more grease receptive and water repellent. In stone lithography, the stone on the press and is kept damp while ink is rolled evenly onto the image with a napped leather roller, the moist open areas repelling the ink. Paper is placed on the stone or plate and covered with a smooth lubricated *tympan*. A scraper bar applies pressure of about 500 pounds per square inch as the plate is moved through the press, forcing ink into the fibers of the paper. As with all printmaking techniques, the image must be inked for each impression.