



Frog Hollow Vermont Craft Gallery

Printmaking Standards Guidelines

Standard Criteria for all Printmaking:

To encourage longevity, high quality materials should be used. Acid-free mats and backing board should be used at a minimum, with 100% cotton rag being a higher quality choice.

If work is framed, the frame should be appropriate to the piece, be of high quality and not dominate the work.

Each print should be signed and numbered in pencil, should it be a limited edition. The number of the individual print, as well as the total number of prints in the edition should be noted. An example would be 5/100, making that print the fifth of 100. The artist is allowed 10% of the edition to be artist' proofs so that an extra 10 would be possible in an edition of 100. Artists' proofs should be signed with as A/P#___ edition of ___. This makes it clear to the customer how many prints exist in the total edition. A label that indicate the type of process used to create the print is essential and should be mounted on the back. A print cannot be re-edited. The juried craftsman must create the imagery, plates, blocks, stones or screens of the print as well as make all the designs and color choices. The juried craftsman must be capable of performing all aspects of the printing process represented and must directly oversee and/or perform all aspects of the printing process represented and must direct oversee and/or perform all work involved in creating the image. The work must demonstrate more than technical proficiency. Although color, design and composition are extremely important the work should also express the personal aesthetic and vision of the printmaker.

Glossary of Printmaking Terms:

- **Original Limited Edition Prints:**

An original print is a work of art made up of ink on paper and often existing in multiple examples, all made by hand. It is created not by drawing on paper with an ink-filled pen or other instrument, but through an indirect transfer process, usually involving a printing press. An advantage of making artwork this way is that numerous "impressions" can be made, since new pieces of paper can be sent through the press in the same way. The artist decides how many to make and that total number of impressions is called an "edition". They are then signed and numbered by the artist. If the prints are not numbered it is called an "open edition". There is no limit to the number of impressions pulled, but each one is hand made. There are various printmaking methods, but the most common techniques are woodcut, linoleum block, etching, lithography, monoprint, and screen print (also known as silk screening or serigraphy). Each technique has its own visual effects.

- **Woodcut and Linoleum Block:**

The earliest print technique was woodcut which first appeared in China in the 9th century. The process was originally used for stamping designs onto fabrics and textiles. To make a woodcut the artist sketches a composition on a plank of wood and then uses gouges, chisels and knives cuts away pieces from the block. Ink is applied to the surface of the block with a roller. Paper is placed over the block, which is then run through a press or is printed by hand, using a spoon or similar instrument to rub the back of the paper to transfer the image from the wood. The recessed cutaway areas do not receive ink and appear white on the printed image. Linoleum is a man made surface with a uniform surface, unlike grain in wood. It is cut and printed in the same manner as woodcuts.

- **Etching:**

In etching, acid is used to “bite” or etch an image into a metal plate. The artist starts with a metal plate (usually zinc or copper) that has been coated with a waxy substance called a “ground”. The artist uses a pointed metal tool to draw a design. When the plate is immersed in acid, the ground covering the plate provides protection and the acid goes only into the drawn lines and eats away the exposed metal. After removing the ground covering the plate, ink is pushed into the incised lines. The surface of the plate is then wiped clean. Dampened paper is placed over the plate and run through the press with much force so that the paper “picks up” the ink. Characteristically, the printed lines of an etching are slightly raised on the paper. Since the sheet of paper is usually larger than the copper plate, there is a “plate mark” or indentation, which surrounds the image.

- **Lithography:**

The printing of lithographs is based on the resistance of grease and water, basically how those two elements don't mix. The artist utilizes greasy substances such as lithographic crayons or tusche, (a liquid applied with a brush), to create an image on a stone or plate. When a lithograph is ready to be printed a chemical mixture is applied across the composition in order to securely bond the greasy drawn image to the surface. The stone or plate is then dampened with water, which adheres only to the non-greasy area. With a roller, oily printer's ink is applied and sticks only to the greasy drawn sections, with blank areas being protected by a film of water. Paper is then laid on the stone and run through a printing press to transfer the image. Each color requires a separate stone or plate.

- **Screen-print:**

Screen-printing is a form of stenciling. To create a silk-screen or serigraph, mesh (originally silk) is stretched tautly across a frame. An image is drawn, glued or otherwise affixed onto the mesh to mask out compositional areas. Once the image is fully prepared on the screen, paper is placed directly beneath the screen and on a tool with a flat rubber edge, called a squeegee, is used to pull ink through the mesh. Ink passes through the screen wherever it has been left open onto the paper below. Each color is screen onto the print separately by either the reduction or multi-screen method.

- **Monoprint and Monotypes:**

Monoprints and monotypes are unique, one of a kind prints that are made using a transfer process. Most commonly these prints are made using an etching press, working with inks on thin plates. Monoprints have a reproducible element such as an etching or relief print, but they are printed in a unique way. A monotype has no reproducible form. It is usually painted or rolled onto a plate. Once printed onto the paper, the remaining ink is reduced to a much lighter “ghost” image. This ghost image can also be reworked and printed. 1/1 is the numbering that designates a monoprint or monotype.

- **Reproductions:**

The above methods are hand-printing (printmaking) techniques. Reproductions are copies of a pre-existing piece of art, such as a painting, collage, drawing or print. More recently, reproductions are being produced and sold in the marketplace. The most prevalent are Giclee and Iris prints (inkjet prints) made on a home computer or professionally, and offset prints. These images are machine and computer generated. The artist makes technical decisions to get the final image but the manipulations are not made by hand. Giclee is a term to describe fine art inkjet printing. “Iris” specially means prints that are made with an Iris printer, but in a broader sense are Giclee prints. A prototype, (painting, collage, original painting or whatever the artist would like to start with) is scanned into Adobe Photoshop or is captured on film and sent to the printer for scanning. The digital information is then transported onto a large drum. Tiny droplets are then squirted out at a very high speed from 4 nozzles, which contain cyan, magenta, yellow and black inks. The process produces a continuous tone image on the paper with an apparent resolution of 1800 dots per inch. Unlike offset prints, Giclees may be printed any number at a time (even one), so that an initial investment of printing hundreds of images is not necessary. Offset printing is a technique where by a four-color separation is made by computer and transferred onto metal plates. Mounted in a circular fashion on the press, the plate is inked and the image is transferred to an intermediary surface such as a rubber blanket. The printed image is then transferred from the rubber blanket to the paper, thus the name “offset”.