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CLASS: **F172** Lecture/PPT (2-1/2 hour)  
Monday, January 23, 9:00-11:30am

TITLE: **The Basics of Art Identification**  
Sponsored by McGraw Graphics

DESCRIPTION: This class is designed to familiarize students with types of art that may be presented for framing. With an understanding of the art and its origination you will be better armed for handling and protecting these images when designing for them. Tools will be discussed and images will be examined with a loupe during class for actual hands-on experience. Assorted historic prints on paper will include relief prints—woodcut, wood engraving; intaglio prints--engraving, etching, mezzotint, drypoint, aquatint; planographic prints—stone lithography, serigraph/silkscreen, giclée, offset lithography; signed/numbered limited editions...and more.

BIOGRAPHY: Chris has been an educator and lecturer for PFM, PPFA, and author having been Mounting Editor for Picture Framing Magazine since 1991 featuring her column *Mastering Mounting* as well as the limited series *The Elements of Design*, *The Design Process*, and *Digital Directions*. She also has a number of self published books:  
*The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, THIRD EDITION, 2008*  
*The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, SECOND EDITION, 2002*  
*Creative Mounting, Wrapping and Laminating, 2000*  
*The Mounting And Laminating Handbook, 1997 (out of print)*

RESOURCES:

AIC Wiki, "*Media Problems*" [http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Media\\_Problems\\_\(PCC\)](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Media_Problems_(PCC)), May 2017.  
Anderson, Kristen. *500 Years of Graphic Art Techniques*. FACTS, San Rafael CA, 1995.  
Belvin, Marjorie E.. *Design through Discovery, 5th Ed.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Orlando FL, 1989.  
Gascoigne, Bamber. *How to Identify Prints, second edition*. Thames & Hudson, New York, 2004.  
Gascoigne, Bamber. *How to Identify Prints*. Thames & Hudson, New York, 1986.  
Mayer, Ralph. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques, fifth ed.* Viking Penguin, NY, 1991.  
Mayer, Ralph. *Art Terms & Techniques, 2nd Ed.* Harper Collins Pub, New York, 1991.  
Peterdi, Garbor. *Printmaking*. Thames & Hudson, The Macmillan Company, 1959.  
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Smith, Ray. *The Artists Handbook*. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, New York, 1987.

# The Basics of Art Identification

Originally written for PFM by Brian D. Barnett, CPF, ASID

Updated by Chris A Paschke, CPF GCF, 2017

## I. Why Art Identification?

Must know what you have to know what to do with it...

Tools needed

- Loupe
- Linen Tester
- Pocket Magnifier
- Traditional Hand Held
- Modern (No Frame)
- Lighted Hand Held
- Lighted Microscope Type

Digital Microscope

## II. Art Print Specifications

Original Print - *in accordance with Print Council of America*

One-of-a-kind print where the artist personally creates the image, plates, and prints

Single or multiple issues of original paper

May be relief, intaglio, planographic or serigraphs

Manual Prints vs. Process Prints

Manual Print

- Print—wood, meal, stone--involving manual artist application
- Physical transferring of ink from prepared surface to paper
- Families
  - Relief (ink on raised parts) = woodcut, wood engraving, metalcuts, linocuts
  - Intaglio (ink on lower grooves) = engraving, etching, mezzotint, drypoint, aquatint
  - Planographic (ink on full surface) = tinted lithographs, color lithographs

Process Print

- Printing surface has not been worked manually by an artist or craftsman
- Commonly reserved and designed for images made using photography
- Families
  - Relief = line block, halftones
  - Intaglio = nature print, photogalvanograph, photogravure
  - Planographic = collotype, photolithograph, offset lithograph (stone or plate)

Electronic Print = photocopy, inkjet, giclée

Signed, Numbered, Cancelled

Early 20th century original prints signed lower right corner

Numbered in pencil in the margin like a fraction 15/75 if Limited Edition

Artist's proof (A/P), Épreuve d' Artiste (E.A.) in addition to series; "Publishers Proof"

2nd editions must be altered in some way, such as color

The plate, stone or stencil should be cancelled when permanently retired

Image Dimensions

Two measurements are usually quoted - image size and outside dimension

The internationally recognized mode of sizing is image width x image height

### III. Relief: manual – eleven centuries old

#### Basic Print-making Process

- Block printing onto wood (Woodcut), linoleum (Linocut), metal (Metalcut)
- All non-printed areas are carved, etched or engraved away
- The block is inked and pressed onto paper
- There is no imprint of the block on the finished art

#### Woodcut

- Seasoned wood cut from length of the tree
- Uses knives and gouges to cut lines and cross-hatching
- Simple images, one color black on white
- Generally with black outline around perimeter where block remained uncut
- Europe, *Nuremberg Chronicle* Albrecht Dürer
- **Japanese Woodblock**
- **Chiaroscuro Woodcut**
  - light-dark colors applied from separate blocks, began 16thC
  - two or more plank-cut blocks in colors of muted tones

#### Wood Engraving

- Wood cut from an end cut from a tree cross-section
- Uses metal-working gravers to cut white lines against black background
- Invented for book illustrations

#### Metalcut

- Germans used metal rather than wood, late 15thC; replaced by intaglio during 16th-18thC
- Used punching of dots and stars into metal surface, or *metalcuts in the dotted manner*

#### Linocut

- 20th century introduced linoleum made popular by Picasso in 1970s
- Alternative surfaces include linoleum, rubber, vinyl, hardboard...

### IV. Intaglio: manual – six centuries old, *taglio* = to cut

#### Basic Print-making Process

- The process of incising designs below the surface of a hard metal plate or stone
- Plates are inked only in the etched depressions then wiped clean prior to printing
- Ink transfers to paper through an etching press leaving a *plate mark*
- Print has slight raised feel to the ink lines, felt or visible at an angle
- An uninked image is called **Blind Intaglio** or Embossing

#### Engraving

- Uncoated copper or zinc metal plate
- Cut V-shaped trench in plate (opposite of wood engraving) with burin or metal graver
- Recognizable by formal lines, cross-hatching and systematic patterns
- Plate is inked—forcing ink into the grooves—then the surface is wiped clean
- Dampened paper is laid on the plate and run through a press
- Dürer is considered the greatest of line engravers
- **Steel Engraving** lines are very firm, crisp, and fine with a silver-grey appearance

#### Etching

- Metal plate is covered with acid resistant wax material then cut through with sharp tool
- Apply acid to eat through the material where the wax has been cut away
- An etching needle is used to create the image
- The exposed metal is eaten away in an acid bath, for inking and printing
- Surpassed engraving in the 17th century with Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Turner, Whistler

### **Drypoint**

- A metal plate is needled with a sharp point leaving a burr or curl of metal
- The burr results in a soft velvety line in the final print
- The burr wears down after a few prints so few good images are produced
- Favored by Dürer and Rembrandt

### **Mezzotint** (Italian *mezzo* = half + *tinta* = tone)

- A reverse engraving on copper or steel plate to produce illustrations with light and shadow
- Plate is roughened with a rocker to print truly solid black areas
- Then gradually smoothed for values from light to dark
- Tonal areas are rubbed down to limit the ink, also dots and dashes but no hard lines
- **Mezzotint** begins with a plate evenly indented with a rocker to produce dark tones, smoothed and polished to carry less ink for a lighter shades

### **Aquatint**

- Porous ground of resin is applied to a plate dipped into acid bath to create tonal values
- Etches microscopic crackles and pits into the image on a plate of copper or zinc
- Produces unlimited tonal gradations to replicate flat tints of watercolor drawings
- Goya's graphic works were dominantly Aquatint, circa 1770
- **Aquatint** begins with a smooth plate and areas are roughened darken

## **V. Planographic: manual** – three centuries old

### Basic Print-making Process

- To print images from a smooth flat-surface rather than an incised or relief plate
- The term was devised to describe lithography
- Both ink and paper are perfectly flat once printed
- Drawn on a smooth limestone block or a metal plate w/grease crayon
- Moistened with water with the greased areas rejecting the water
- Leaves the crayon drawing exposed to print
- Ink is rolled over the entire plate and paper is placed in position
- Minimal pressure is applied ensuring the stone does not leave a plate

### **Lithograph**

- Created on stone or metal plate based on the natural rejection of water by oil or grease
- Often two plates: one for black imitating the art, one with fawn colors as a background
- Also sometimes provides a linear border and lettering of the same color
- Prints are pulled from a flat stone or metal surface chemically sensitized to attract ink
- May be holes in the corners of the tinted area to alignment
- Used by Delacroix, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Braque and Miró
- **Chalk Lithograph** lines are tiny, irregular spots like crayon on rough paper
- **Offset Lithograph** a *process: planographic* method since the 1960s, until digital

### **Serigraph/Screenprint/Silkscreen**

- A technique using a squeegee to force ink through silk onto paper or canvas
- It differs from other printing as colors are paint films rather than ink stains
- Started from Oriental stencil printing
- Colors are flat and ridges appear where colors overlap
- Andy Warhol made it popular during the Pop Art movement of the 60s

## VI. Comparisons - Relief, Intaglio or Planographic

Paper = A plate mark? – Intaglio

Paper = Embossing on back of the paper caused by shapes in the art? – Relief

Paper = Perfectly flat ink and paper? - Planographic

Ink = Does the ink appear squashed leaving a dark rim? – Relief

Ink = Dark line - Does the ink seem to rise up from the paper? – Intaglio

Ink = Pale line - Is the paleness resulting from white spaces among specks of ink? - Intaglio

Ink = Pale line - A shade of gray rather than black? – Intaglio

Solid black = Really solid black under a magnifier? - Relief

Solid black = True solid black, but merges into paler tones? – Intaglio (mezzotint)

Solid black = Hard to imagine the area being created? - Relief

Solid black = Easier to imagine the white being cut away instead? - Relief

Solid black = White specks or white lines in the black seemingly removed with a knife? - Relief

Solid black = Made up of lines and crosshatching blocking any white? – Intaglio

White lines = Clear white lines within the black, not hard edged? – Relief

White lines = Crumbled looking as if scratched with a sharp tool on stone? – Planographic (lithograph)

Straight white lines = Throughout parts of the image? – Relief (wood engraving)

Uninked lines = Straight unlinked lines in large engraving? – Relief – (wood engraving)

## VII. Comparisons – Between Techniques

Engraving, Etching, Drypoint

Engraving = more formal lines, created with a sharp edged tool

Etching = relaxed freely drawn lines, created with a pointed tool

Drypoint = point must penetrate copper surface, furry edged lines are shaky, scratched

Mezzotint, Aquatint

Mezzotint = a) solid, even black areas with gradation between light to dark

b) pale gray tones at the edges show linear dot pattern left by the rocker

c) at the edge are dots of black left by the tooth of the rocker

Aquatint = a) sudden transitions with no gradation

b) pale areas have a fine network of grain

c) islands of white surrounded by rings of ink

d) crisp firm edges emphasized by an etched border

Lithograph, Silkscreen

Lithograph = a) difficult to tell smooth-stone litho from screenprint

b) white is created by exposing raw unpainted paper

Silkscreen = a) thicker paint creates raised surface

b) white opaque ink may be layered over colors

c) only one using florescent inks and shows hint of mesh fabric

<b>Art #</b>	<b>Type of Print</b>	<b>Relief</b>	<b>Intaglio</b>	<b>Planographic</b>	<b>Other</b>	
	Animation Cell					
	Aquatint					
	Aquatint – Hand Colored					
	Blind Intaglio - Embossing					
	China Collé					
	Drypoint					
	Engraving – Hand Colored					
	Etching					
	Giclée					
	Linocut – Three Color					
	Lithograph – Hand Colored					
	Photogravure					
	Serigraph/Screenprint					
	Steel Engraving					
	Stone Lithograph – Offset Lithograph					
	Woodcut					