The Basics of Art Identification

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Sponsored by McGaw Graphics

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In order to provide professional customer
guidance at the framing design counter
it is important to have a working knowledge
of various fine art categories
that may be encountered.

Today we will explore manual printing
on paper and then we'll test your knowledge
with a hands-on quiz.

Tools for Identifying Art

1. Loupe
2. Linen Tester
3. Pocket Magnifier
4. Traditional Hand Held
5. Modern (No Frame)
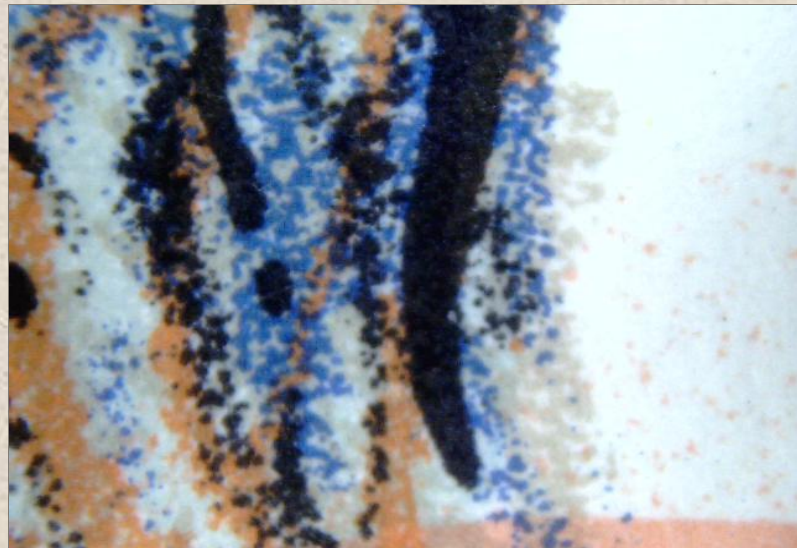6. Lighted Hand Held
7. Lighted Microscope

Digital Microscope

An inexpensive magnifier with USB for variable magnification levels exceeding x100.

A framer can share the image with the customer to verify authenticity or copied and saved in the computer.

Enlargement of stone lithograph

Original Prints on Paper

Any print in which the artist created the image on plate, block, stone or screen and has printed himself.

May be single or multiple issues of original images.

- Relief
- Intaglio
- Planographic
- Serigraph/Screen Print

Manual vs. Process Prints

Manual Prints

- Up to mid-19th C all prints were created directly on the printing surface of wood, meal, stone
- Done by the artist own hand
- Physical transfer of ink from prepared surface to paper
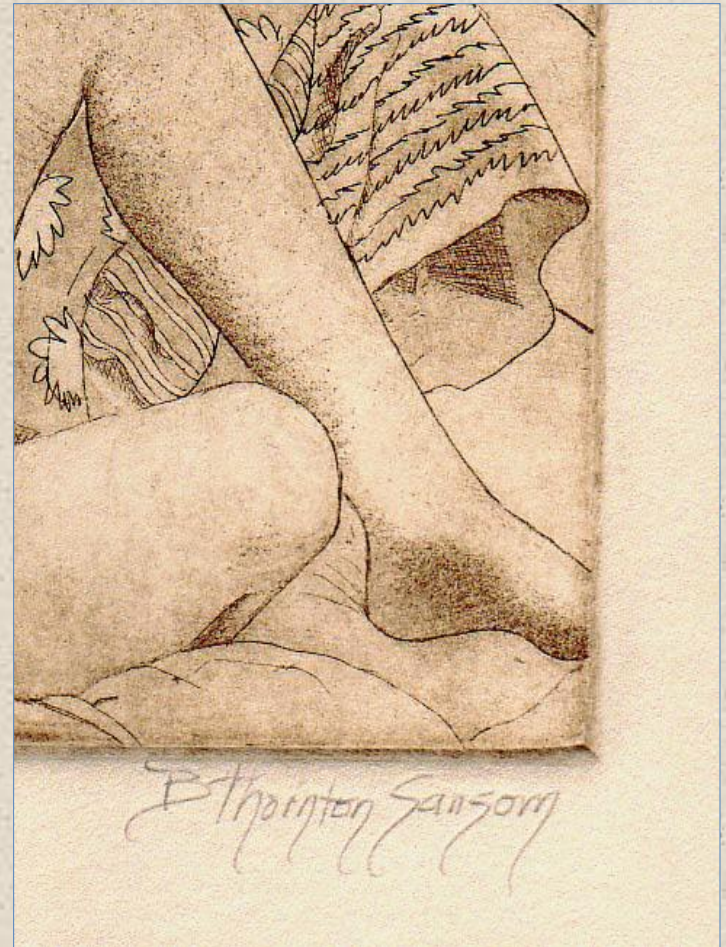
Process Prints

- During 19th C
- Technical transfer of image using other methods
- Commonly reserved for images made using photography

Signed Numbered Prints

Since early 20th C original prints have been hand-signed in the plate or lower right margin, and numbered (1/50) if limited edition, in accordance with Print Council of America.

2nd editions must be altered in some way…color.

Cancellation

Once the plate, stone or stencil is retired permanently it should be obliterated or canceled with a line across the surface or rounded corners.

Hand-colored
Photogravure

Image Dimensions

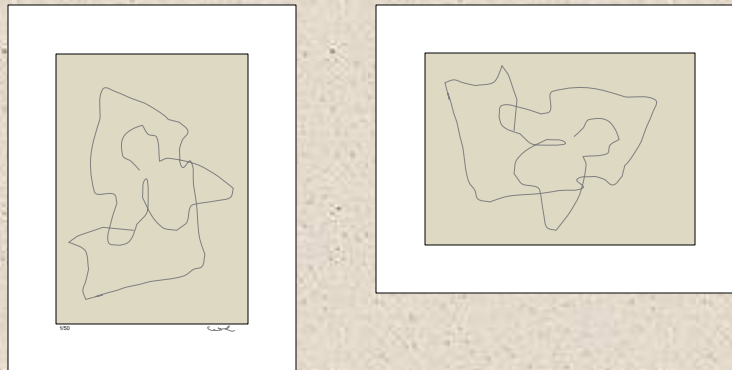Two measurements:

      Image dimension (ID)

      Paper size outside dimension (OD)

International sizing of image is width x height:

      Portrait = 8" x 10"

      Landscape = 10" x 8"

Print Categories

Relief

All processes in which non-printed areas of a block are carved, engraved or etched away. Inks are applied onto the plate surface and transferred to paper. The reverse is intaglio.

Intaglio

Incising the design into the surface of hard metal or stone. Plates are inked in the etched parts with the plate wiped clean then transferred to paper with an etching press.
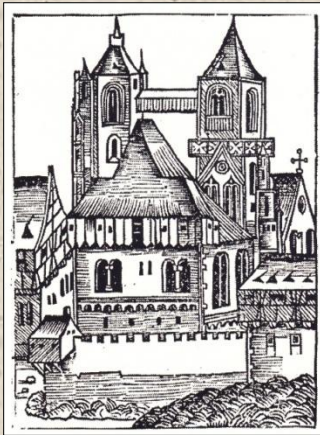
Planographic

Printing images from a smooth surface rather than cutting into a plate. The word was originally designed to describe lithography.

Relief Print

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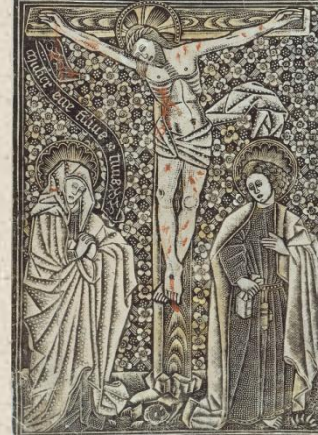- The block is inked and pressed onto paper
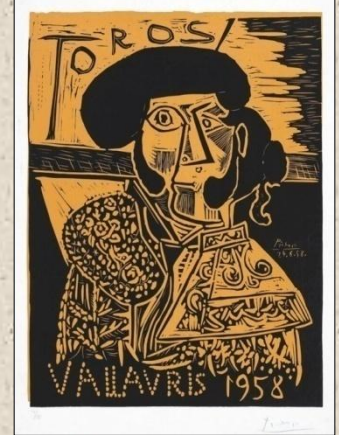- There is no imprint of the block on the finished art

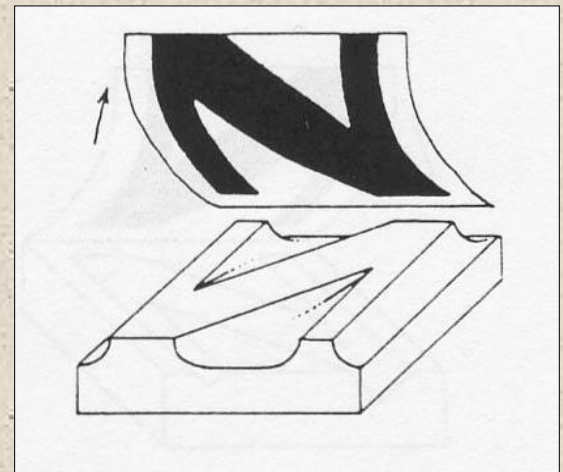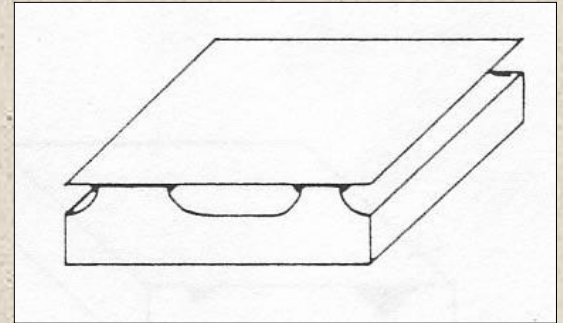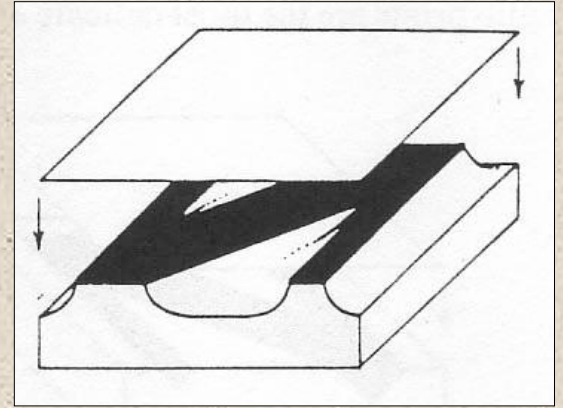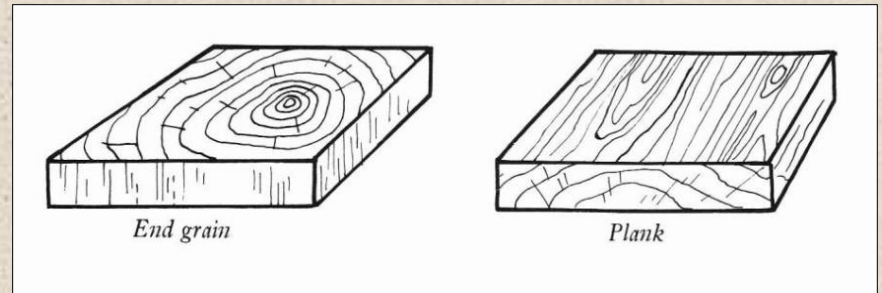Woodcut   Woodblock   Chiaroscuro   Metalcut   Linocut

Relief Print

1. The incised printing block (wood, linoleum, letterpress) is inked and paper is aligned.

2. Minimal pressure is applied contacting the paper with the raised image transferring ink to paper.

3. The paper is lifted from the block and the result is a printed piece bearing **no** block impression.
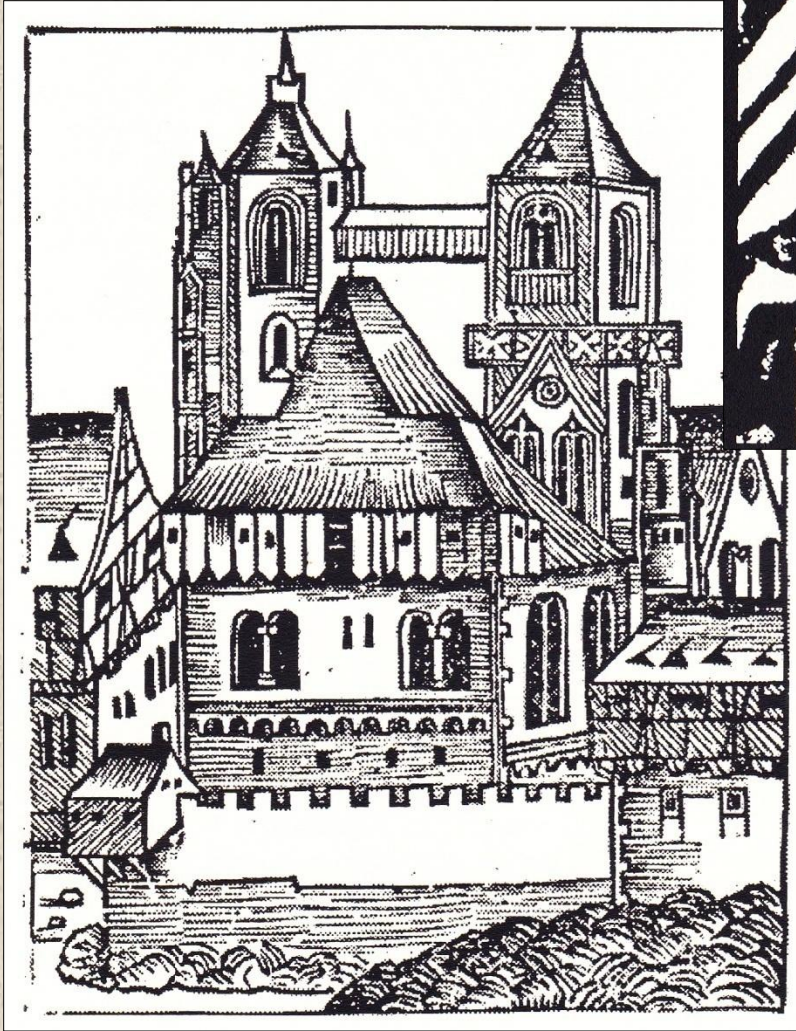
Woodcut

End grain   Plank

- Seasoned plank wood
- Knives and gouges cut lines and cross-hatching
- Simple images, one color black on white
- Black outline around perimeter where block is uncut
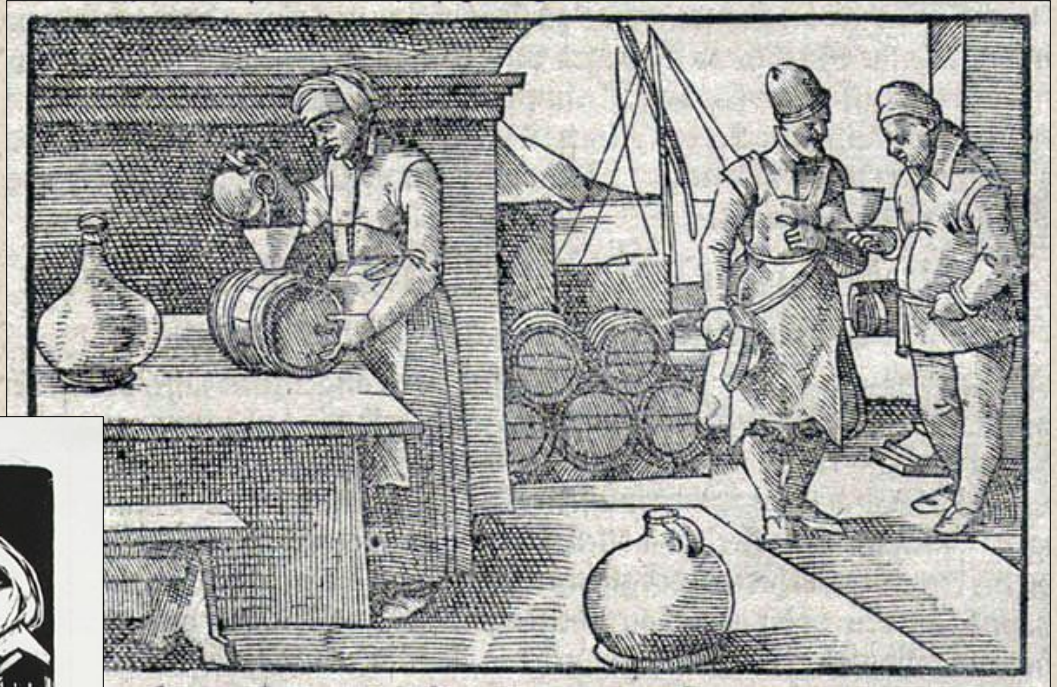- Europe, Albrecht Dürer
- Japanese Woodblock

Woodcut

Printed areas are solid color often showing wood grain.

Printed areas have uneven edges where wood was carved away with printed line border giving a stamped appearance.

Woodcut

Tobias Stimmer & Christof Murer
Wine and Vinegar Production, 1580

Jan Weigers
Kirchner's House, 1920

Chiaroscuro (kjaroˈskuːro) Woodcut

- First color woodcuts, name meaning "light-dark"

- Italians used during 1500. German style, one block had lines, other blocks flat color.

- From three blocks in brown and black ink

German Woodcut
Cupids, circa 1508

Chiaroscuro

- Built up from four shades of brown ink.

- The pressure of each block leaves indentations in the paper.

Chiaroscuro Woodcut
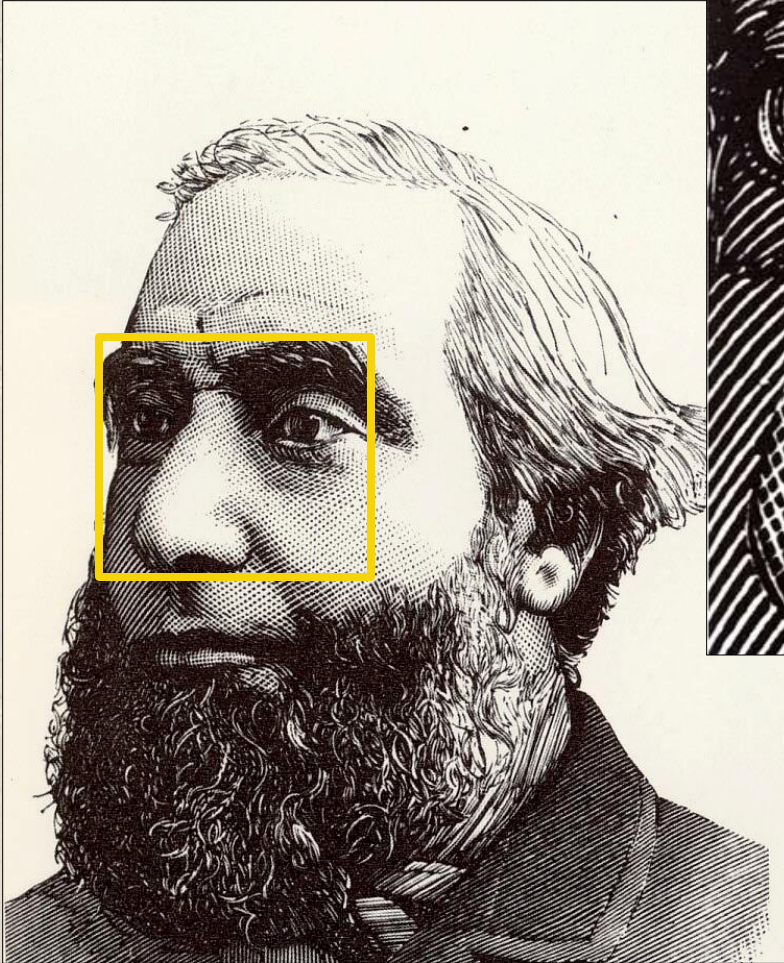by John Baptist Jackson
(detail, 1745)

Wood Engraving

- Image cut from the end cut of a tree cross-section
- Uses metal-working gravers to cut lines
- White image against black background
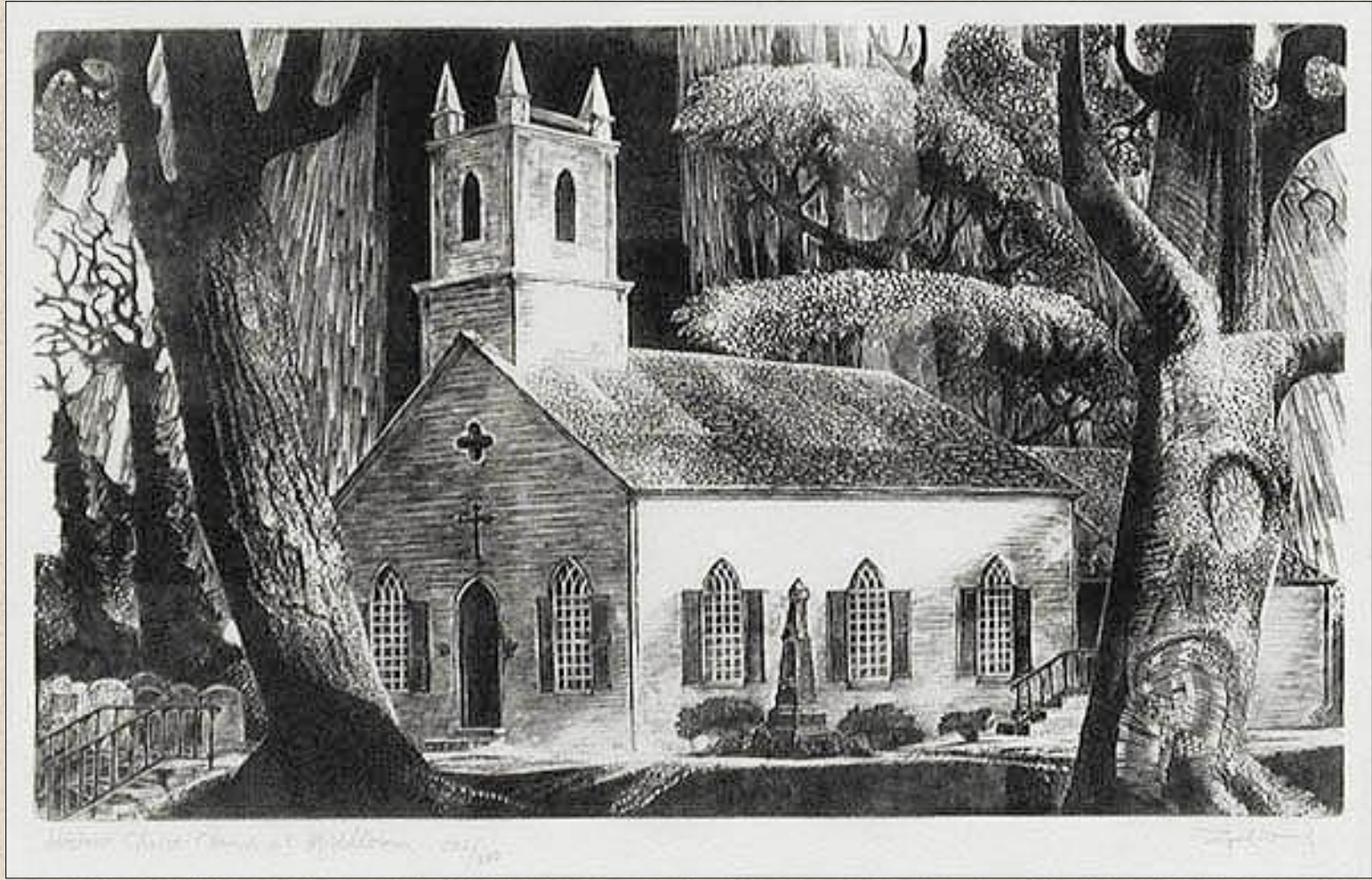- Invented for book illustrations

Wood Engraving

The wood is cut across the grain cutting away non-printed areas.

Wood Engraving

Wood Engraving, Lynd Kendall Ward II, *Christ Church*

Relief Comparisons

Woodcut - Uneven edges cut with gouges

Chiaroscuro - Multi block print; highlights are unprinted paper; crude bulky lines

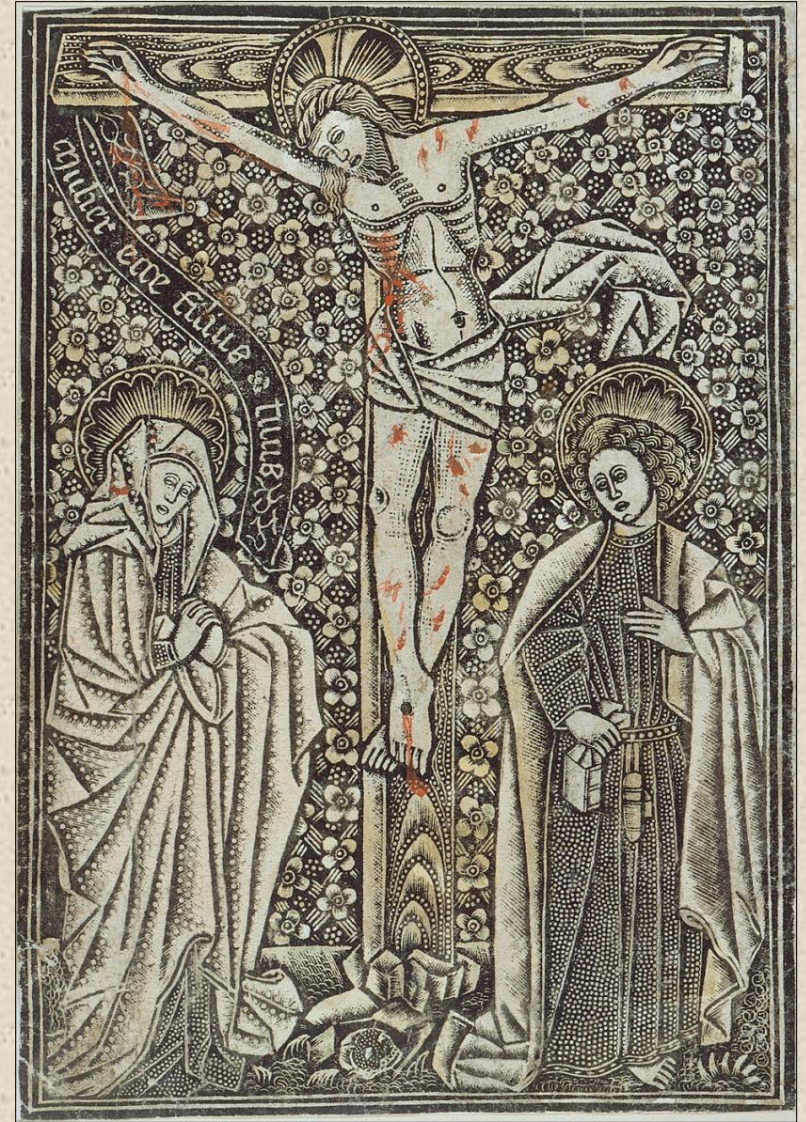**Wood Engraving** – Fine, systematic lines created with metal gravers

Japanese Woodblock

Japanese color woodblock by Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa, 1847*

Metalcut - Dotted

- Ornamental illustrations and borders for books late 16th century.

- Uses a thin metal plate rather than a wooden block and areas are cut or hammered back with punches.

- Metalwork punches create patterns of dots, circles, stars, and text.

- Very little space is left undecorated.

- Prints are sometimes called *prints in the dotted manner.*

Linocut

- A design is cut into a linoleum, rubber, vinyl surface with a sharp knife, V-shaped chisel or gouge.

- The block is inked and impressed onto paper.

- Printing may be by hand or press.

Color Linocut
Pablo Picasso
Toros Vallauris, 1958

Intaglio Print

- Italian *taglio* means "to cut"
- Incising designs into the surface of metal plate or stone
- Inked only in the etched depressions then wiped clean
- Ink transfers to paper using an etching press
- <u>High pressure always leaves a plate mark</u>
- Print has slight raised feel to ink lines

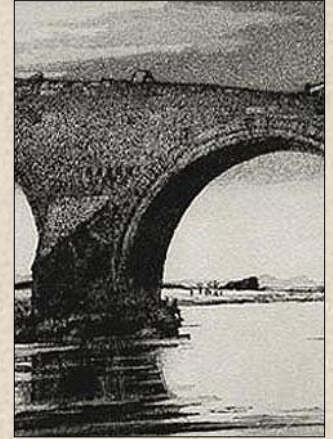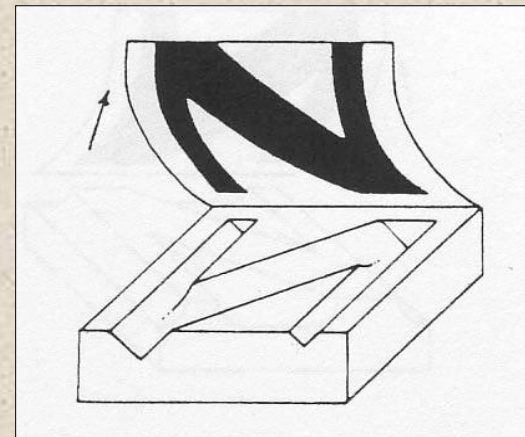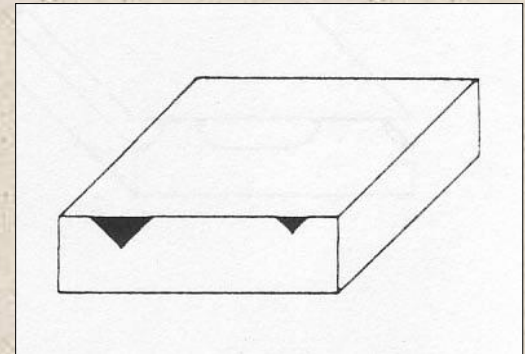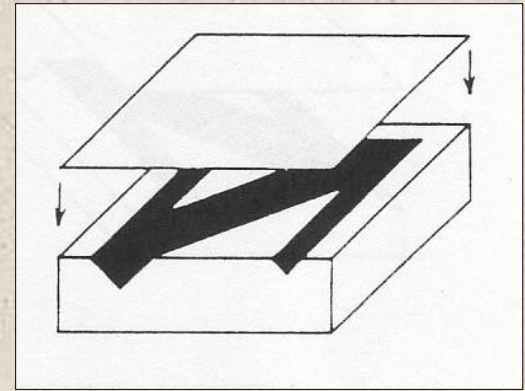Engraving   Etching   Drypoint   Mezzotint   Aquatint

Intaglio Print

1. Acid etched or engraved plate is inked.

2. Extreme pressure is applied forcing ink into the engraved/etched lines on the plate.

3. The paper print is lifted from the plate resulting in a reverse image.

Blind Intaglio is the imprint without ink called blind embossing.

Engraving

- Engravings and etchings are the most delicate and detailed
- Uncoated copper or zinc metal plate
- Cut V-shaped trench in plate with burin or metal graver
- Recognizable by formal lines, cross-hatching and patterns
- Forces ink into the grooves then the surface is wiped clean
- Dampened paper is laid on the plate and run through a press
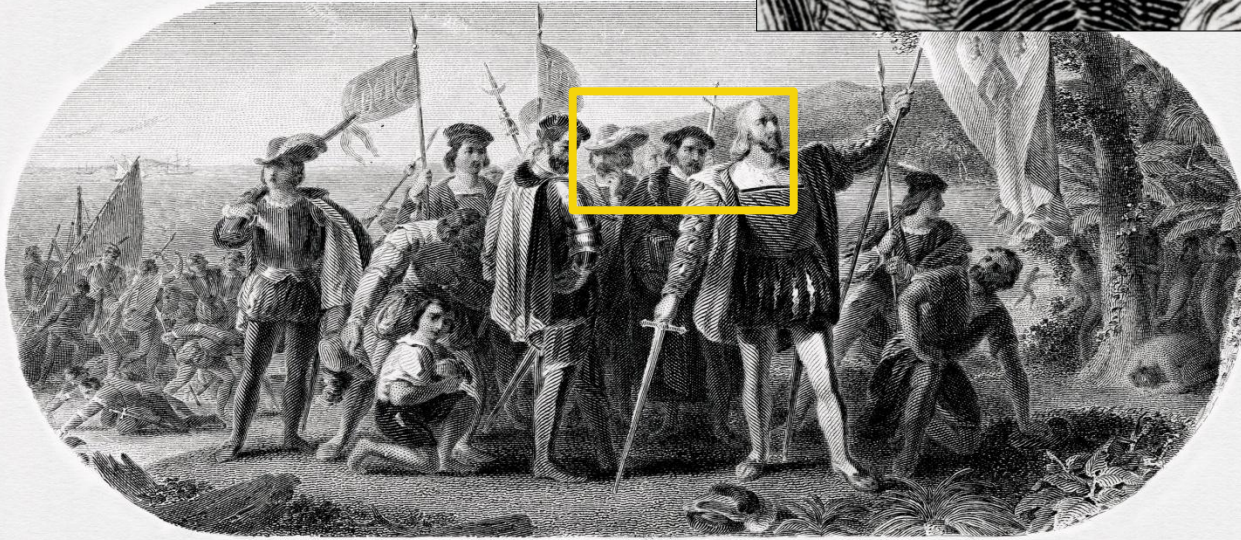- Dürer is considered the greatest of line engravers

Engraving

All lines incised with burin on copper

Steel Engraving

- Popular 1820-1860
- Engraving on hard steel
- Lines are very firm, crisp, and fine
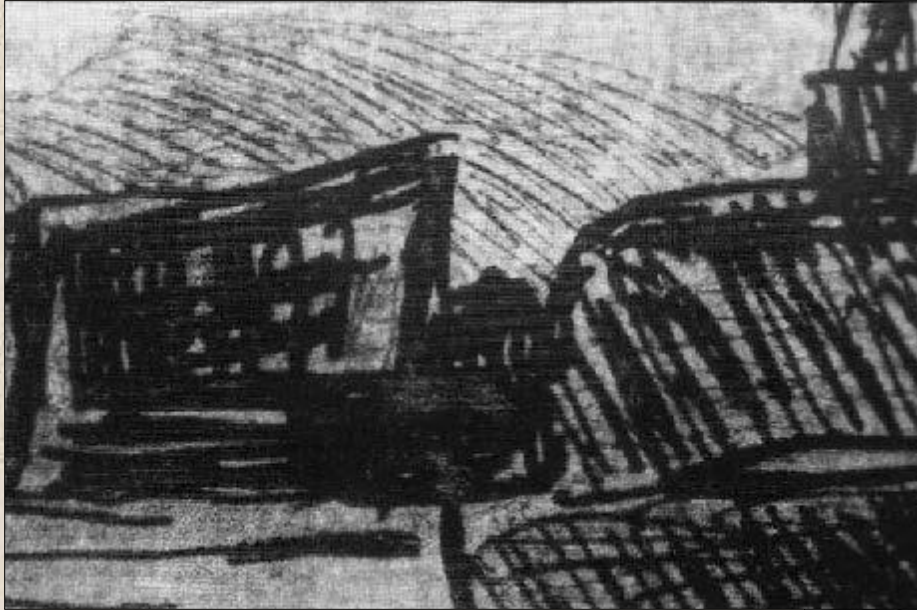- Shimmery silver-grey appearance

Etching

- Metal plate is covered with acid resistant wax material
- Image is cut through with sharp etching needle
- Acid is applied to eat through where the wax is cut away
- Surpassed engraving in the 17th century
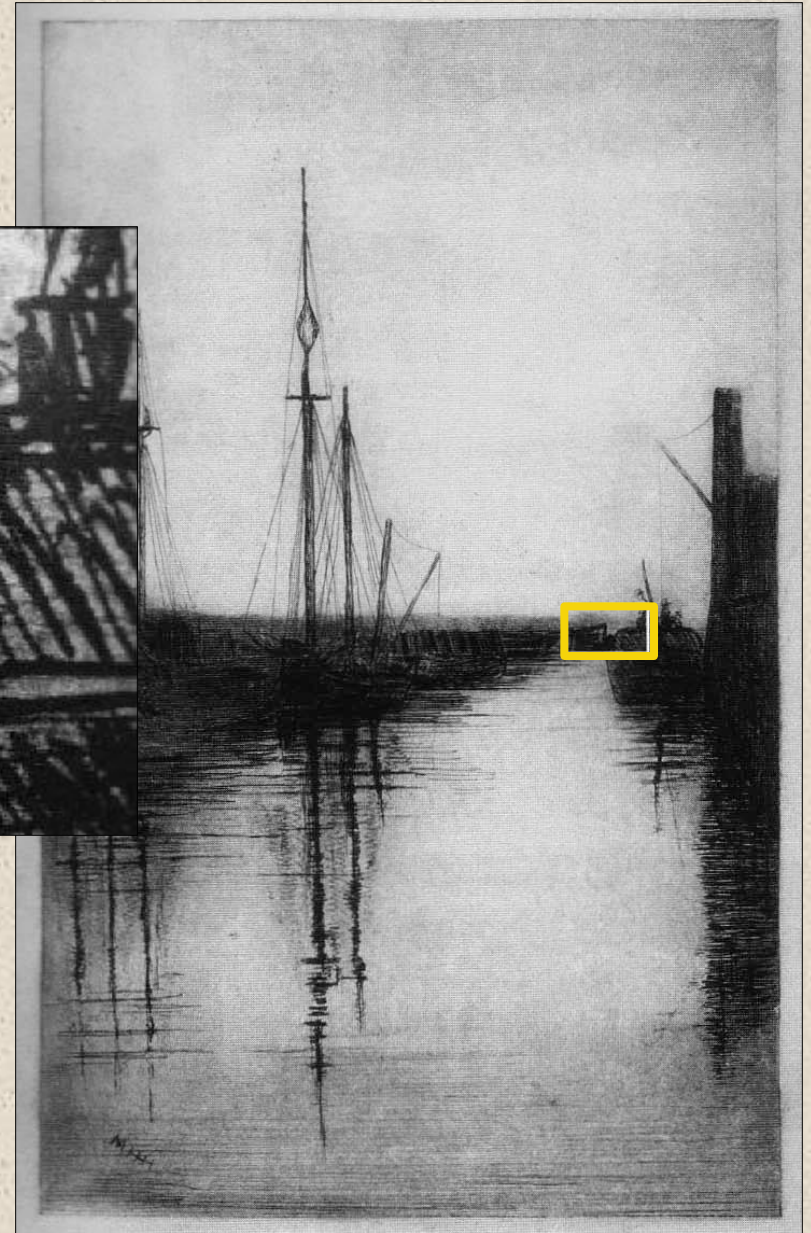- Rembrandt, Gainsborough, Turner, Whistler

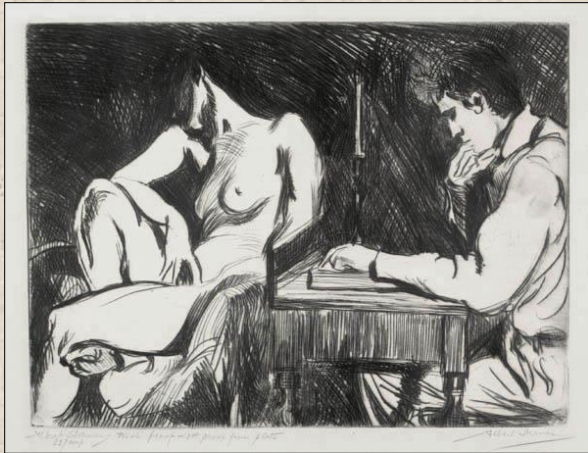

etching needle

Etching

The artist draws on an acid resistant ground exposing the image which is etched in a bath of acid.
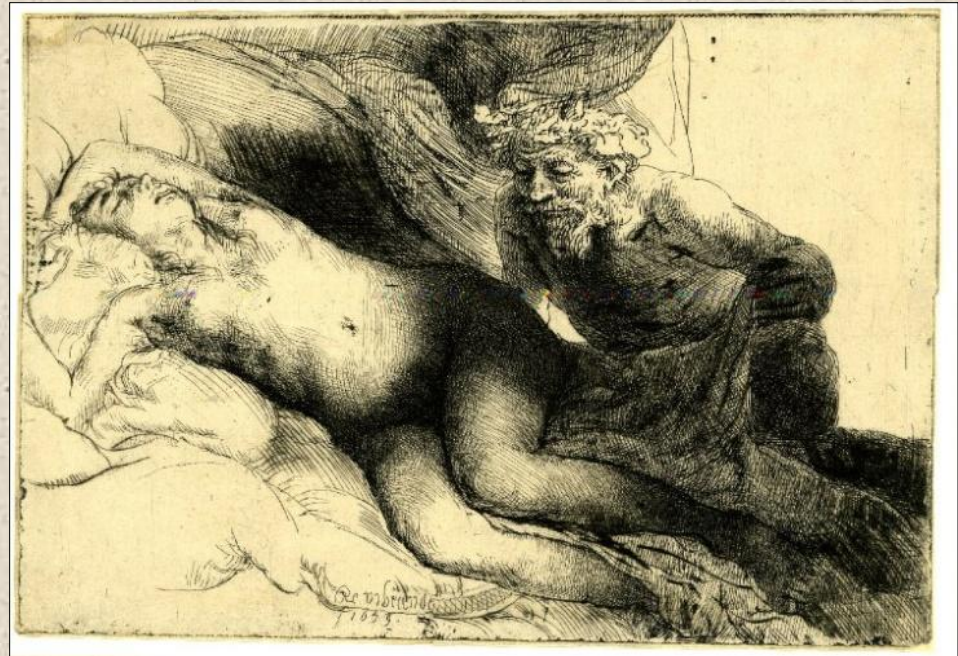
Drypoint

- Needled with a sharp point leaving a burr
- The burr results in a soft velvety line in the final print
- The burr wears down after a few prints
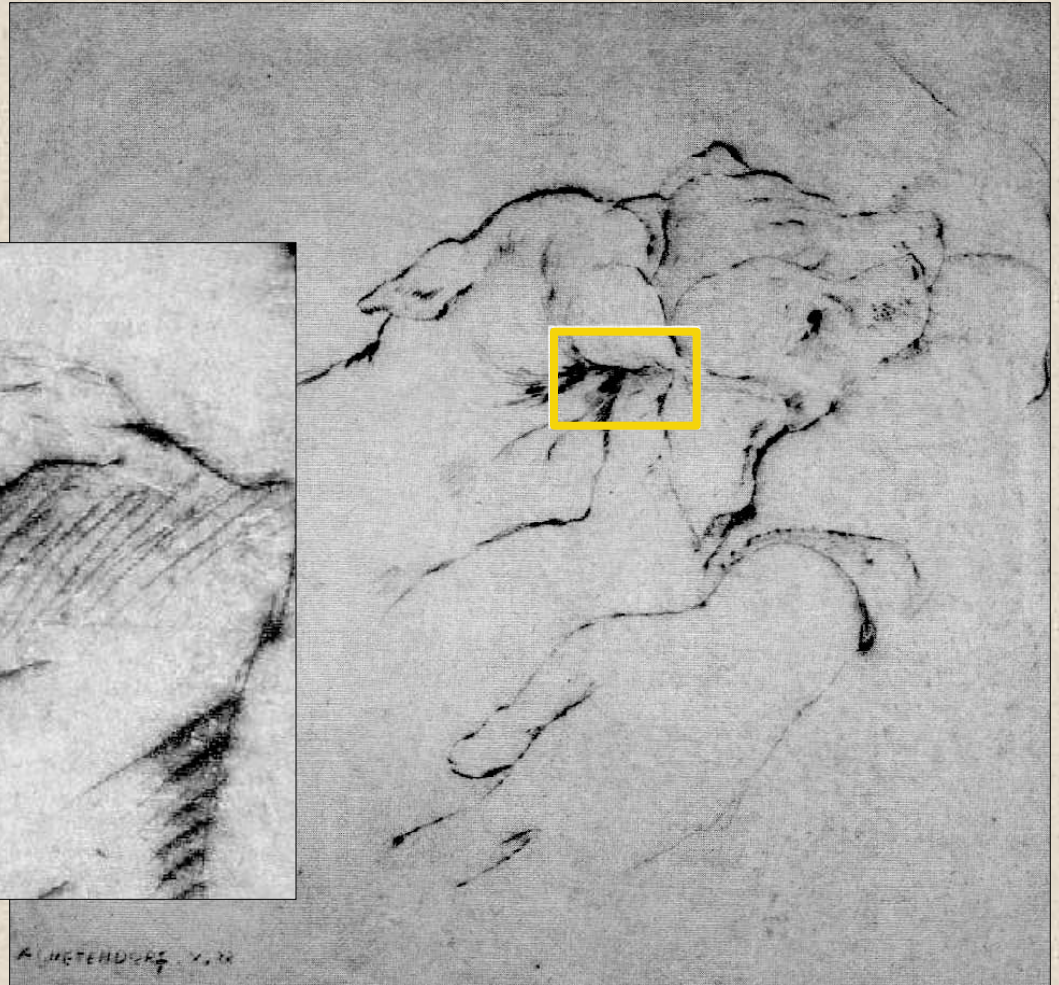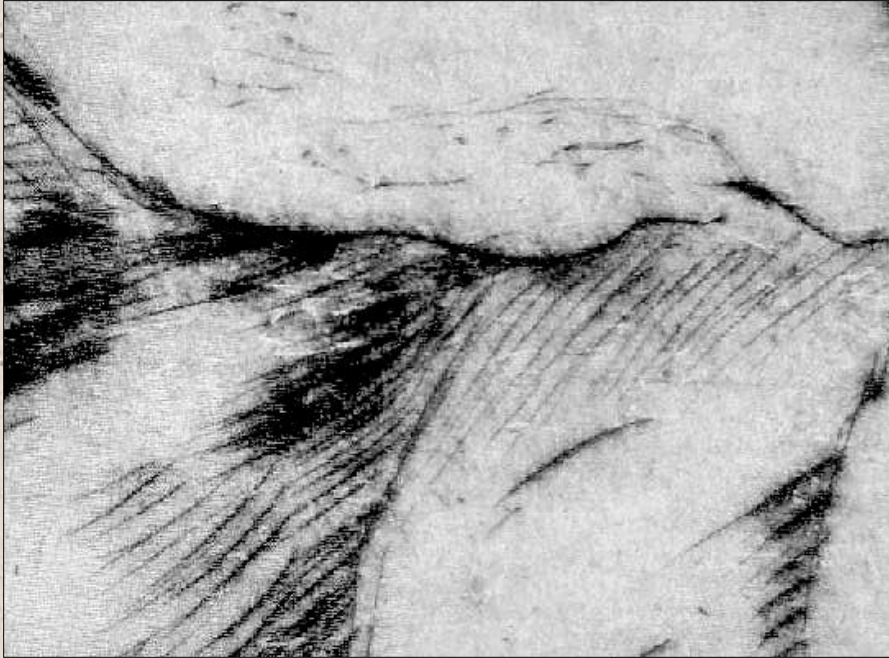- Favored by Sterner, Dürer, Rembrandt

Albert Edward Sterner
Meditation

Rembrandt

Drypoint

- Image is scratched into the surface with a steel needle or diamond point tool
- Heavy ink is intentionally left to help create tone

Mezzotint

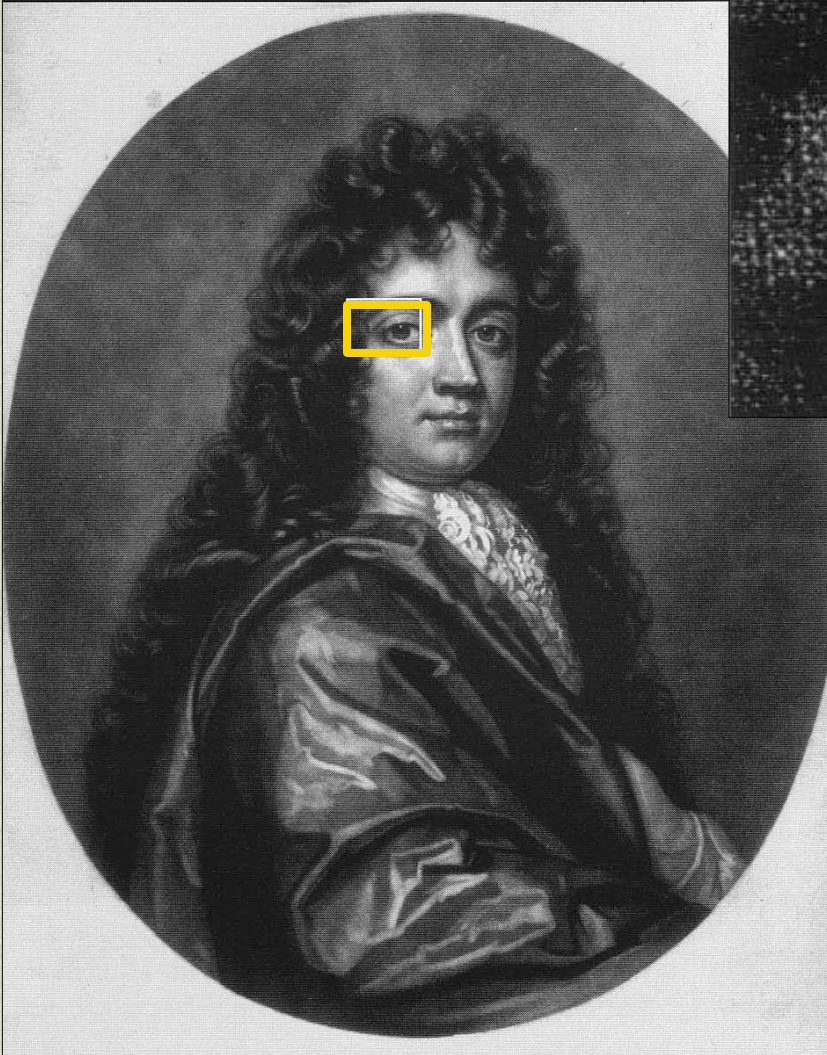- *Mezzotinto* meaning "half tint" produces mid-range tones
- Roughens a metal plate with thousands of little dots made by a metal rocker
- The process works from dark to light by smoothing and polished to make areas carry less ink to print lighter
- Tiny pits hold the ink when the face is wiped clean

Mezzotint

Soft, velvety lines cover the plate with indentations and burrs made by a rocker.

Mezzotint

The first tonal method enabling half-tone shading without line or dot patterns like cross-hatching or stipple. Technically a drypoint method.

Used throughout 18th -19th centuries to reproduce portraits.

Petrus Lelly Eques Pictor Caroli 2.
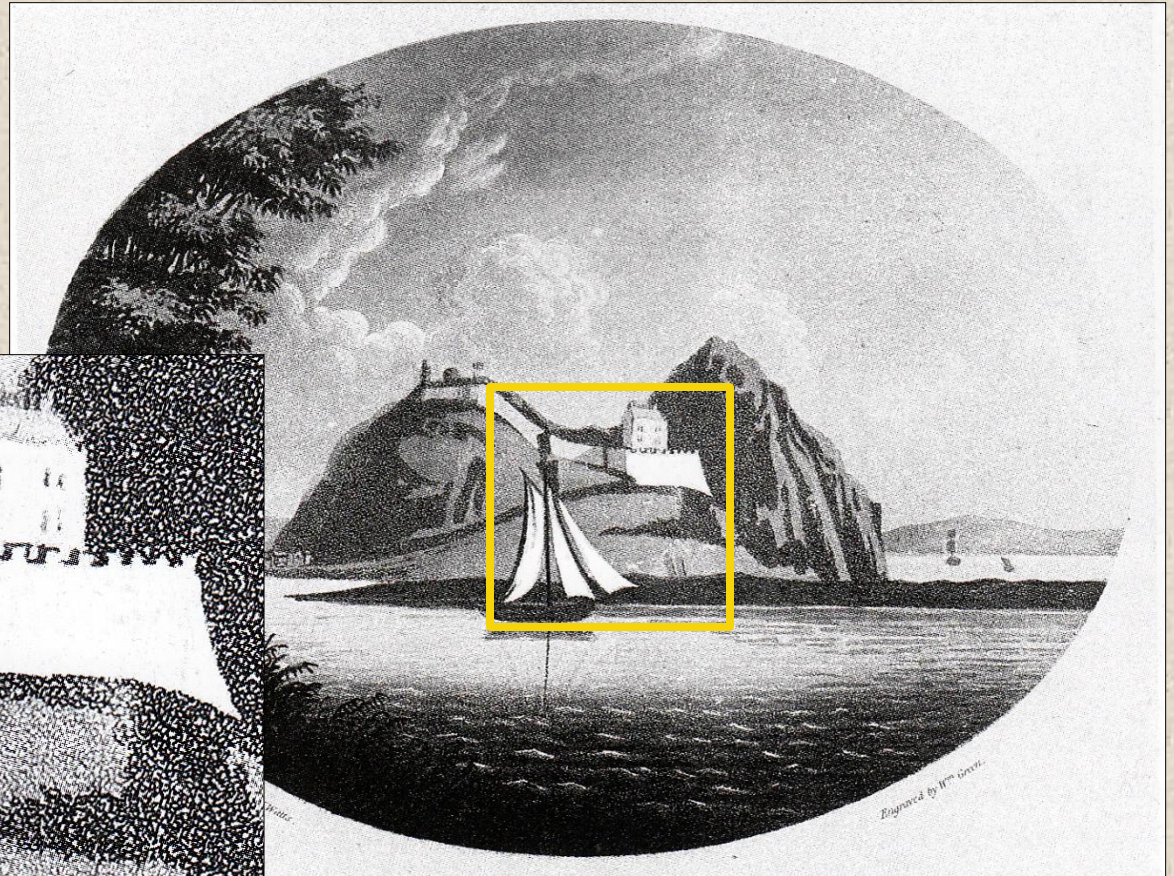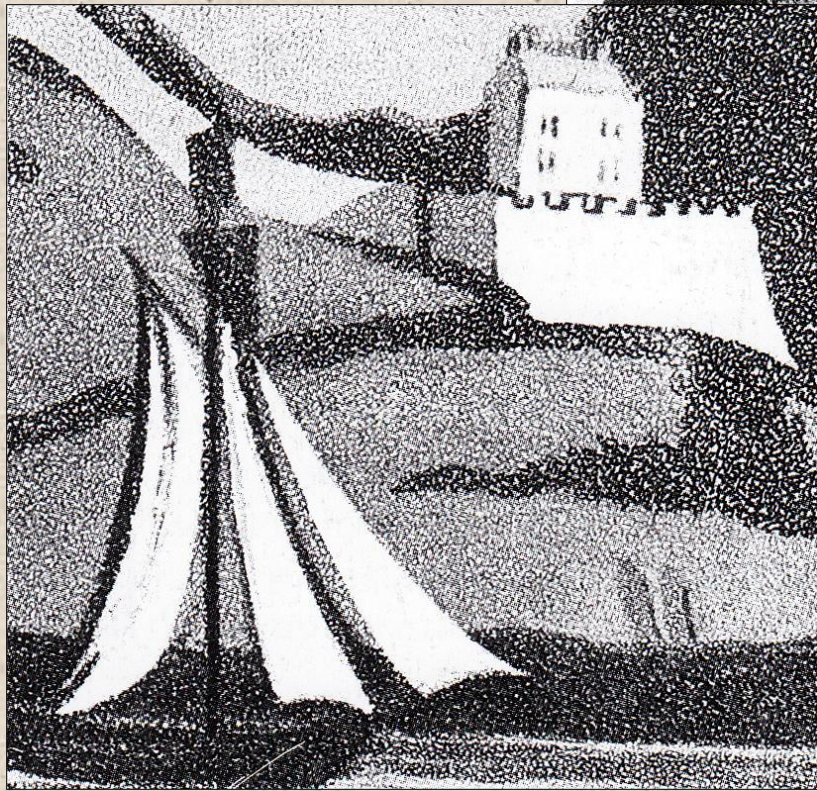Magna Britannia Francia & Hibernia Regis.

Aquatint

- Like etching, aquatint uses the application of a mordant to etch into the metal plate of copper or zinc
- Engraving uses a needle to make lines
- Acid etches microscopic crackles and pits into the image
- Uses powdered rosin applied to the plate and dried
- Plate is dipped into acid bath to create tonal values
- Produces unlimited tonal gradations to replicate watercolors

Mezzotint begins with a plate surface evenly indented with a rocker to produce a dark tone of ink. It is smoothed and polished to carry less ink for a lighter shade.

Aquatint begins with a smooth plate and areas are roughened to make them darker.

Aquatint

This method imitates a watercolor wash more realistically than mezzotint.

Aquatint

Malcolm Osborne
Stirling Bridge

Aquatint Hand-colored
Valentin Daniel Preisler
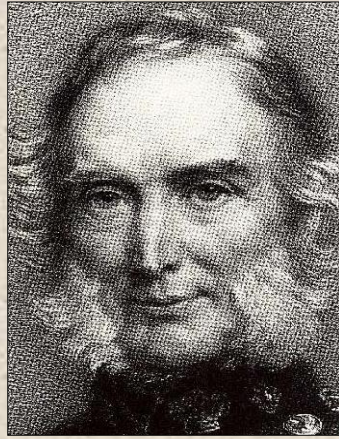*Georg Philipp Telemann,* 1750

Planographic Print

- Images printed from a smooth flat-surface not a relief plate
- Image drawn on smooth limestone or metal w/grease crayon
- The greased areas reject the water when moistened
- Leaves the crayon drawing exposed to print
- Ink is rolled over the entire plate and paper is placed in position
- Minimal pressure so the stone does not leave a plate mark

Lithograph
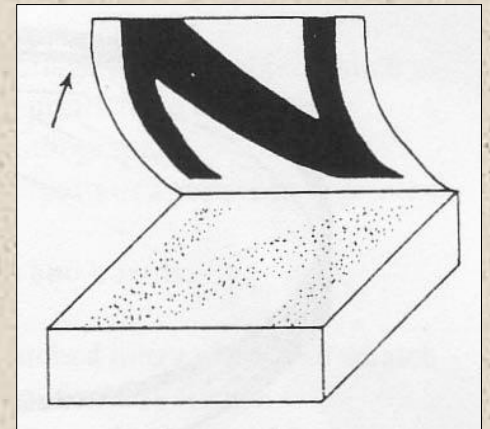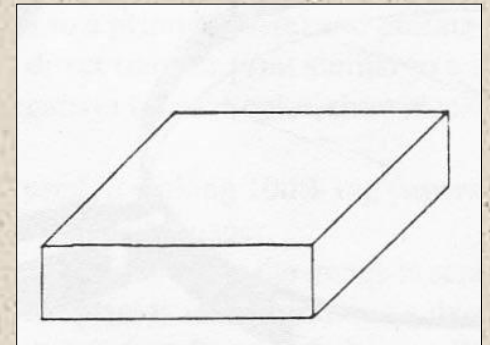

Stone Lithograph

Offset Lithograph
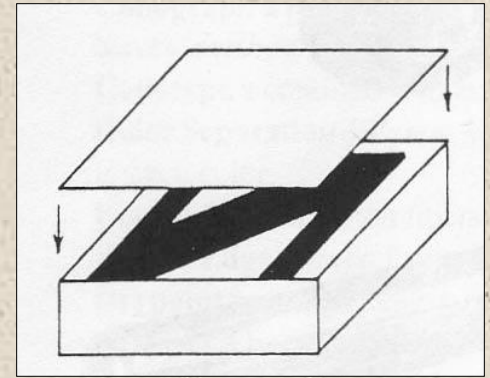

Serigraph/Screenprint

Planographic Print

1. Image drawn on a smooth block of limestone or a metal plate with a grease crayon. The stone is moistened with water but the greased areas reject the water, leaving the crayon drawing exposed.

2. Ink is applied over the entire plate and paper is aligned.

3. Minimal pressure is applied to transfer the image to paper leaving no plate mark.

Lithograph

- Prints pulled from a flat stone or metal
- Chemically sensitized to attract ink
- Delacroix, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Braque, Miró

Litho Press
Germany

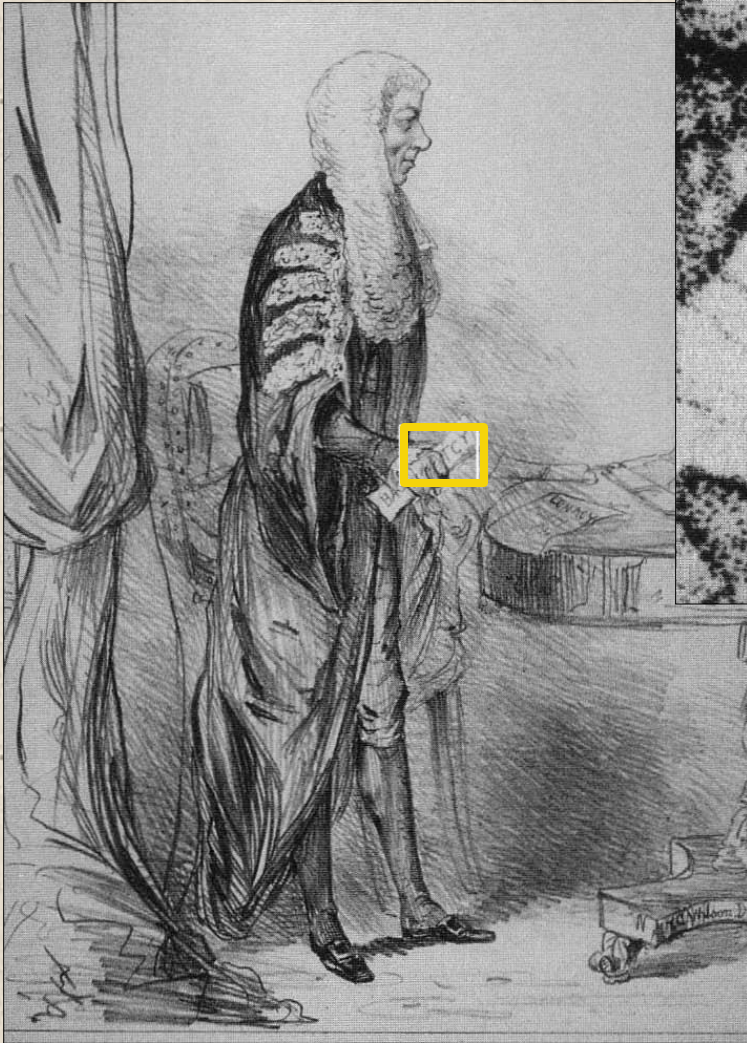Lithography stone (negative) and print(positive)
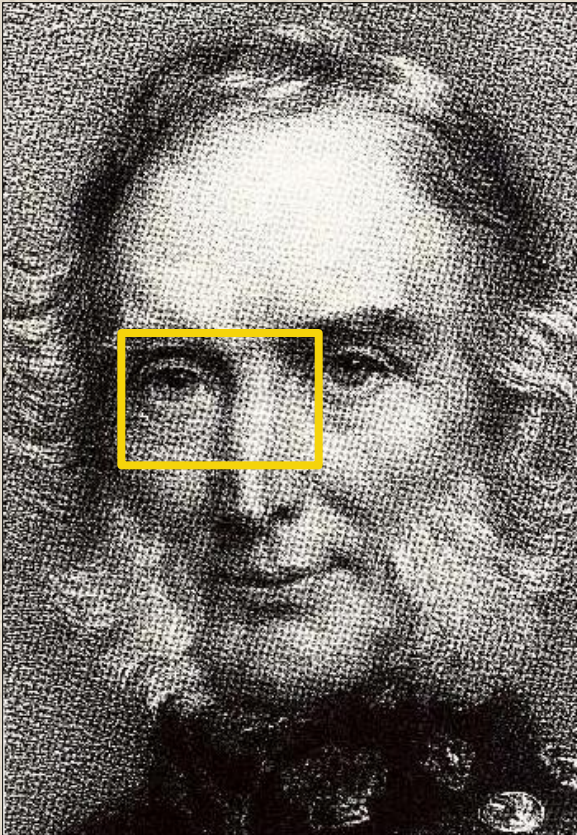

Stone Archive
Munich

Lithograph

- Chalk lithograph: lines are tiny, irregular spots like crayon on rough paper.

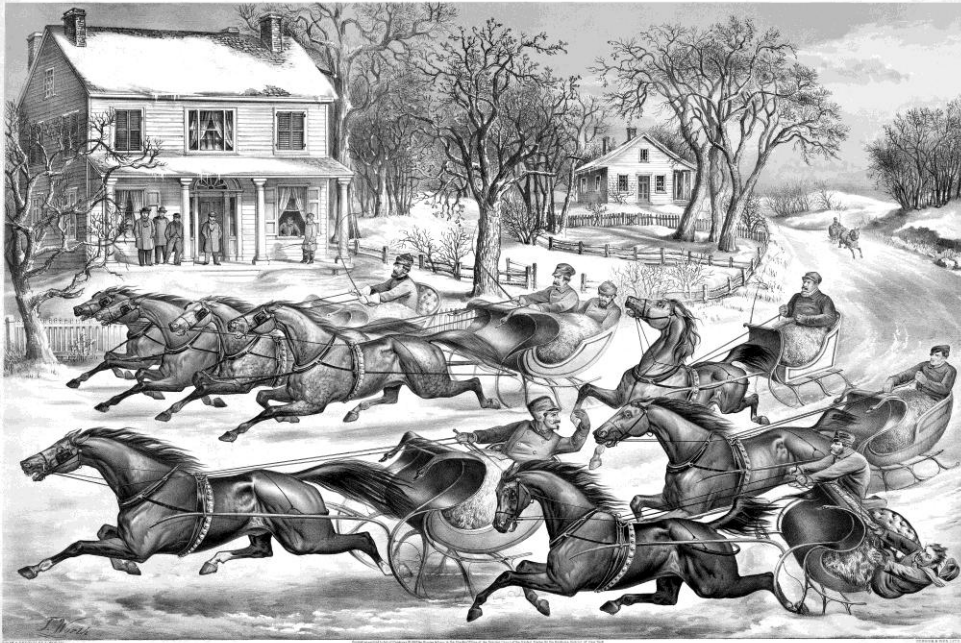- All spots have the same tone and are flat to the touch.

Stone Lithograph

Lithograph

Stone lithograph by Thomas Worth
Currier & Ives, publisher
A Brush for the Lead

Offset Lithography

Process: planographic

- A photographic technique where the inked image is transferred (offset) from a plate to a rubber blanket, then to the printing surface.

- Plates are flexible aluminum, polyester, Mylar are used instead of stone tablets.

- Used for high-volume books and magazines illustrated in color.

- Most common printing since the 1960s before electronic inkjet printing.

Marc Chagall offset lithograph, 1964

Serigraph/Screenprint

- Known as serigraph, silkscreen, screenprint, and stencil print
- One color is printed at a time for a multi-color image
- A squeegee forces ink through silk onto paper or canvas
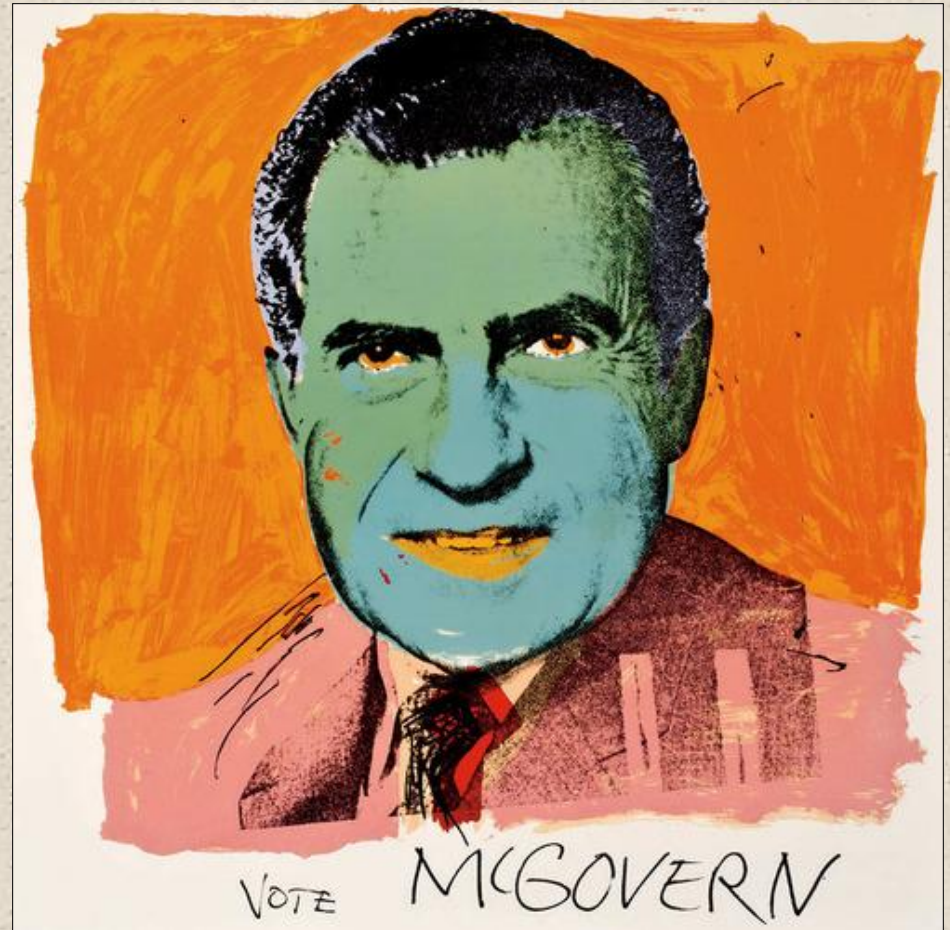- Colors are flat and ridges appear where colors overlap

Serigraph/Screenprint

Andy Warhol popularized
screen printing in 1960s

Andy Warhol Gallery

Serigraph/Screenprint

Screenprint, 1980
Bob Saunders

Flat graded colors,
shown overlapping in the detail.

Comparisons

Paper

- A plate mark? – Intaglio
- Embossing on back of the paper caused by shapes? - Relief
- Perfectly flat ink and paper? – Planographic

Ink

- Does the ink appear squashed leaving a dark rim? – Relief
- Dark line - Does ink rise up from the paper? – Intaglio
- Pale line - Paleness from white spaces among specks? - Intaglio
- Pale line - A shade of gray rather than black? – Intaglio

Comparisons

Solid Black

- Very solid black under a magnifier? - Relief
- Solid black merging into paler tones? – Intaglio (mezzotint)
- Hard to imagine the area being created? - Relief
- Easier to imagine the white being cut away? - Relief
- White specks or white lines in the black with a knife? - Relief
- Made up of lines and crosshatch blocking white? – Intaglio

Comparisons

White Lines

- Clear white lines within the black, not hard edged? – Relief
- Crumbled looking as if scratched with a sharp tool? –
  Planographic (lithograph)

Other

- Straight lines throughout parts of the image? –
  Relief (wood engraving)
- Uninked straight lines in large image? – Relief (wood engraving)

Technique Comparisons

Engraving vs. Etching vs. Drypoint
Engraving = more formal lines, created with sharp edged tool
Etching = relaxed freely drawn lines, created with a pointed tool
Drypoint = point penetrates copper surface, lines are furry, shaky, scratched

Mezzotint vs. 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

Technique Comparisons

Lithograph vs. 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)

Now for the Quiz

- Each table will be given a print numbered from **1** to **16.**
- Each table is labeled a letter from **A** to **O.**
- Each table is a team.

- Using a loupe, identify the specific print family and the type of print.
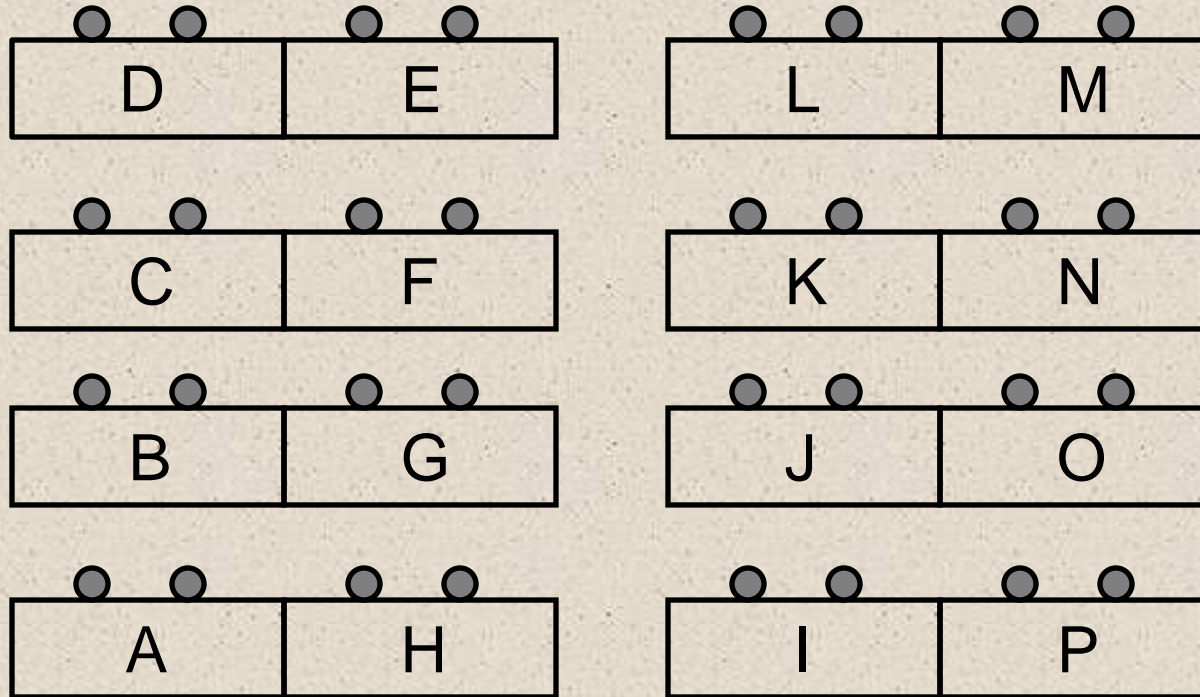- Mark the print number across from the matched process on your handout

Example:
If your team decides the #16 is a screenprint, write 16 next to screenprint

- Your team has five minutes to decide the type of print and family.
- When the 5 minute timer is up, pass the print to the next table in succession.
  A to B, B to C…the final table will pass the table A.
- Do not pass the art until the monitor indicates to do so.
- Be sure to place a number in every box so you do not miss one.
- Please DO NOT remove the prints form their protective sleeves.

Pass art every 5 minutes

D	E		L	M
C	F		K	N
B	G		J	O
A	H		I	P

ART

Front of Room

Using the Loupe

- Place the clear round end of the loupe directly on the area of the print you wish to examine.

- Begin with your eye 2-3" away from the loupe and adjust the focus by moving your eye closer or further away, not by moving the loupe.

Art Identification Sheet

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

Art Identification Answer Sheet

Art #	Type of Print	Relief	Intaglio	Planographic	Other	PPT
1	Woodcut	X				1
2	Etching		X			2
3	China Collé		X		X	3
4	Engraving – Hand Colored		X			4
5	Linocut – Three Color	X				5
6	Steel Engraving		X			6
7	Animation Cell				X	7
8	Blind Intaglio - Embossing		X			8
9	Lithograph – Hand Colored			X		9
10	Giclée				X	10
11	Stone Lithograph – Offset			X		11
12	Serigraph/Screenprint			X		12
13	Aquatint		X			13
14	Photogravure (process: intaglio)				X	14
15	Drypoint		X			15
16	Aquatint – Hand Colored		X			16

1 - Woodcut

2 - Etching

3 - China Collé

Thin colored paper is mounted to the backing support. The etching image is transferred to a surface pulling finer details off the plate, also allowing for altered background color.
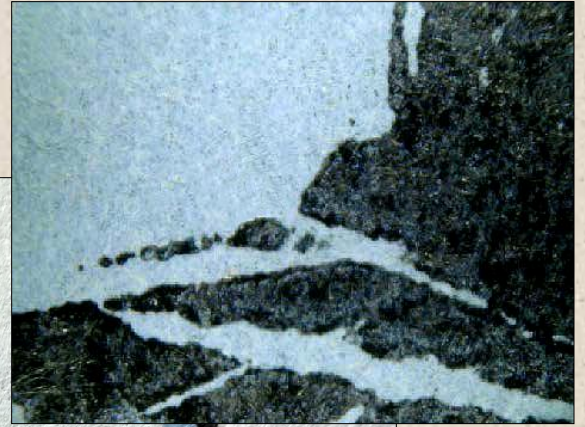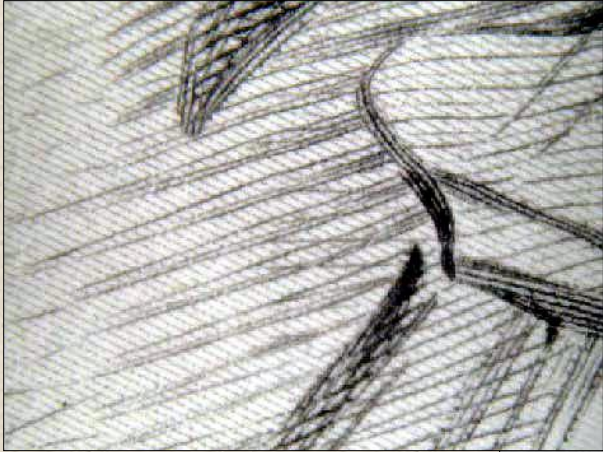
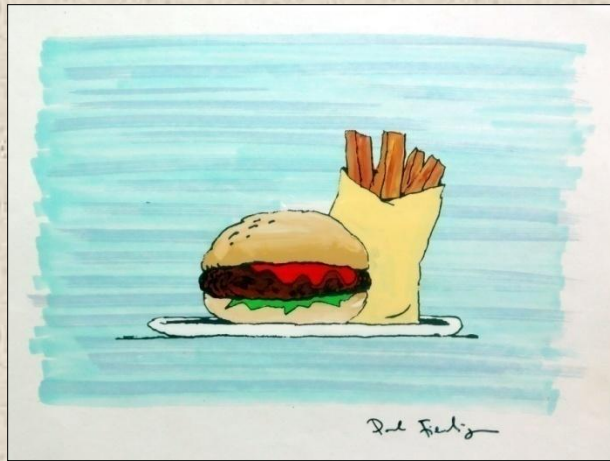# 4 – Engraving, Hand Colored
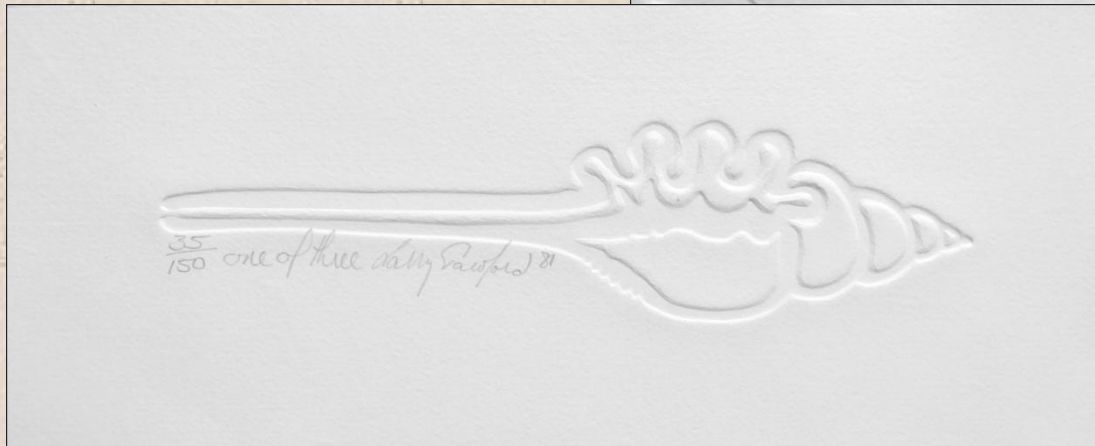
5 – Linocut, 3 Color

6 – Steel Engraving

7 – Animation Cell

8 – Blind Intaglio

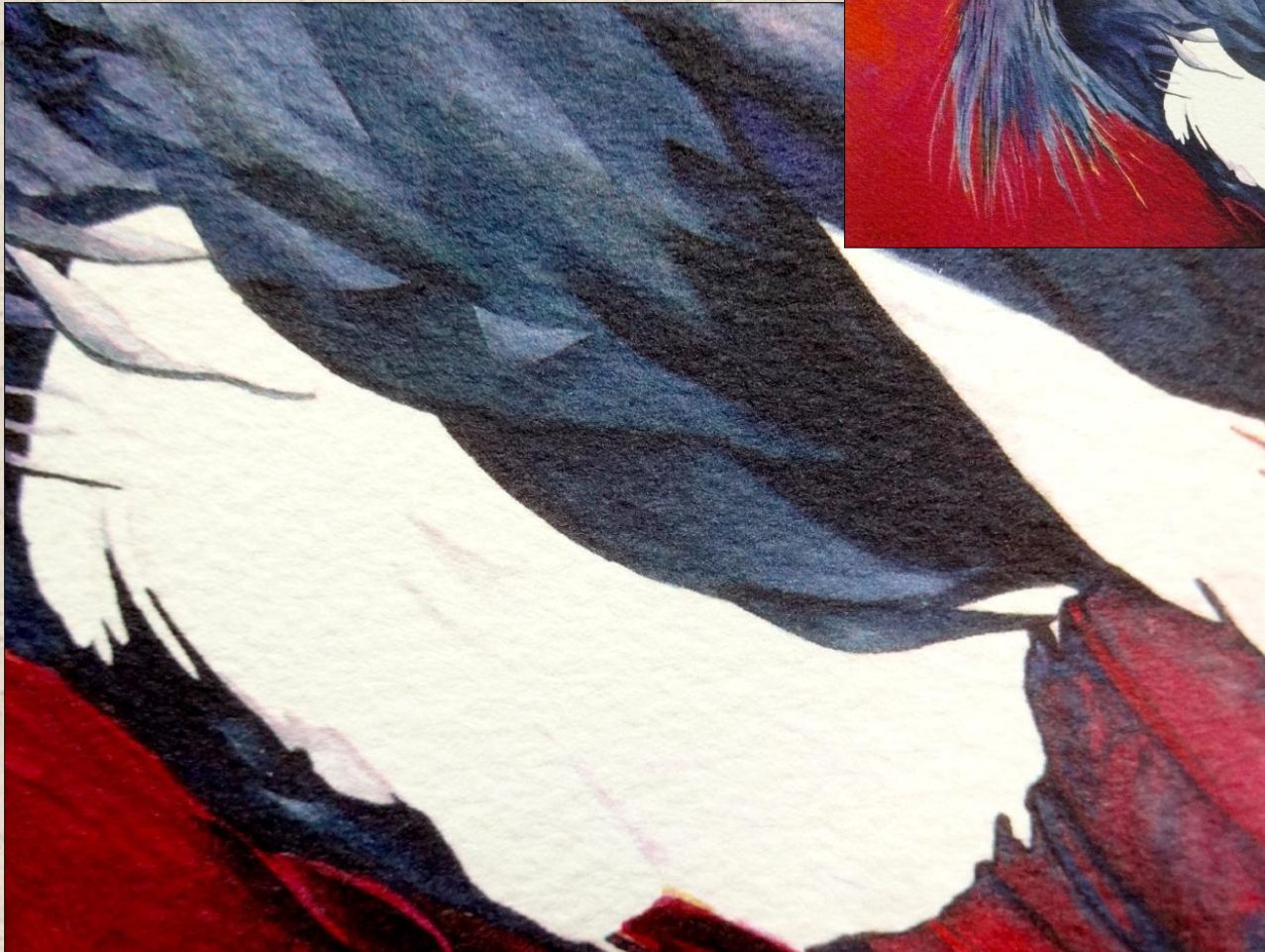Also known as embossing, this is printing the relief image into wet paper with no ink.
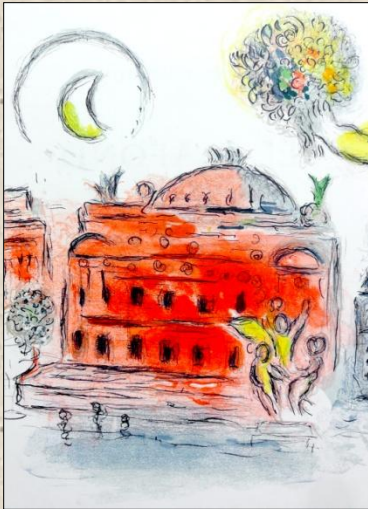
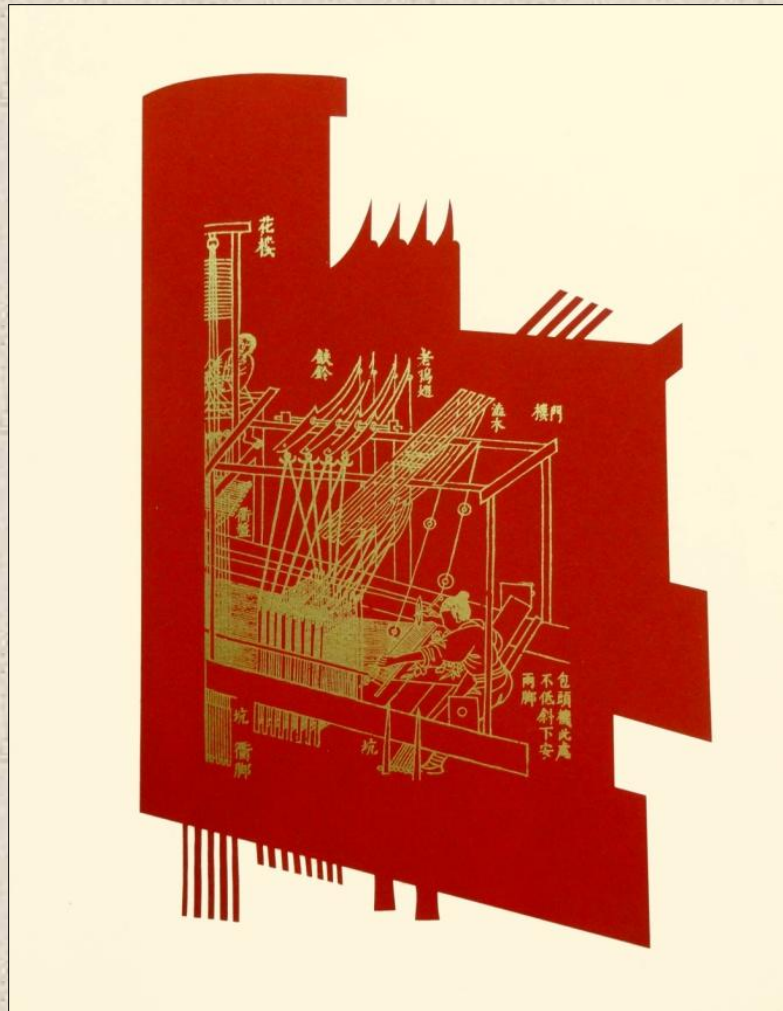# 9 – Lithograph, Hand Colored

10 – Giclée

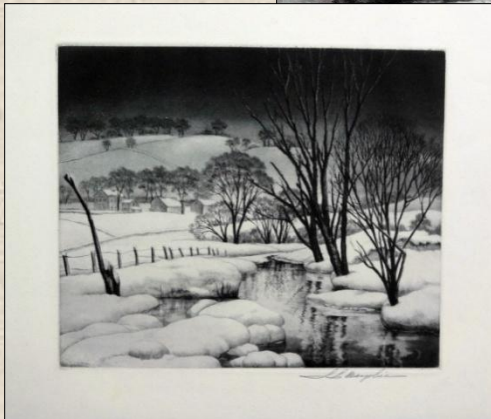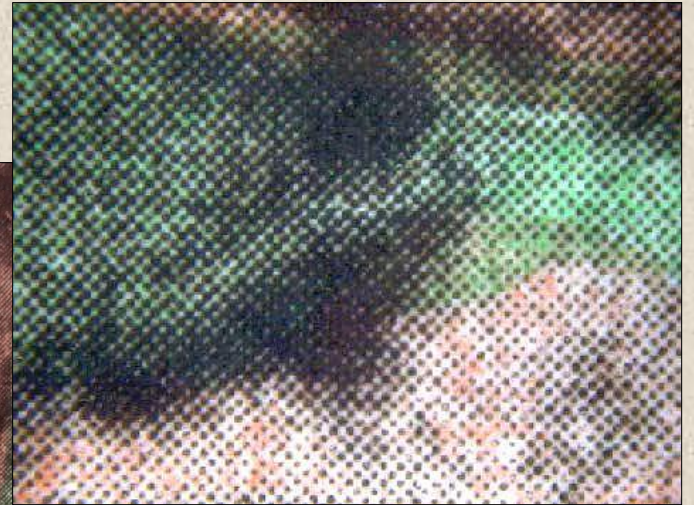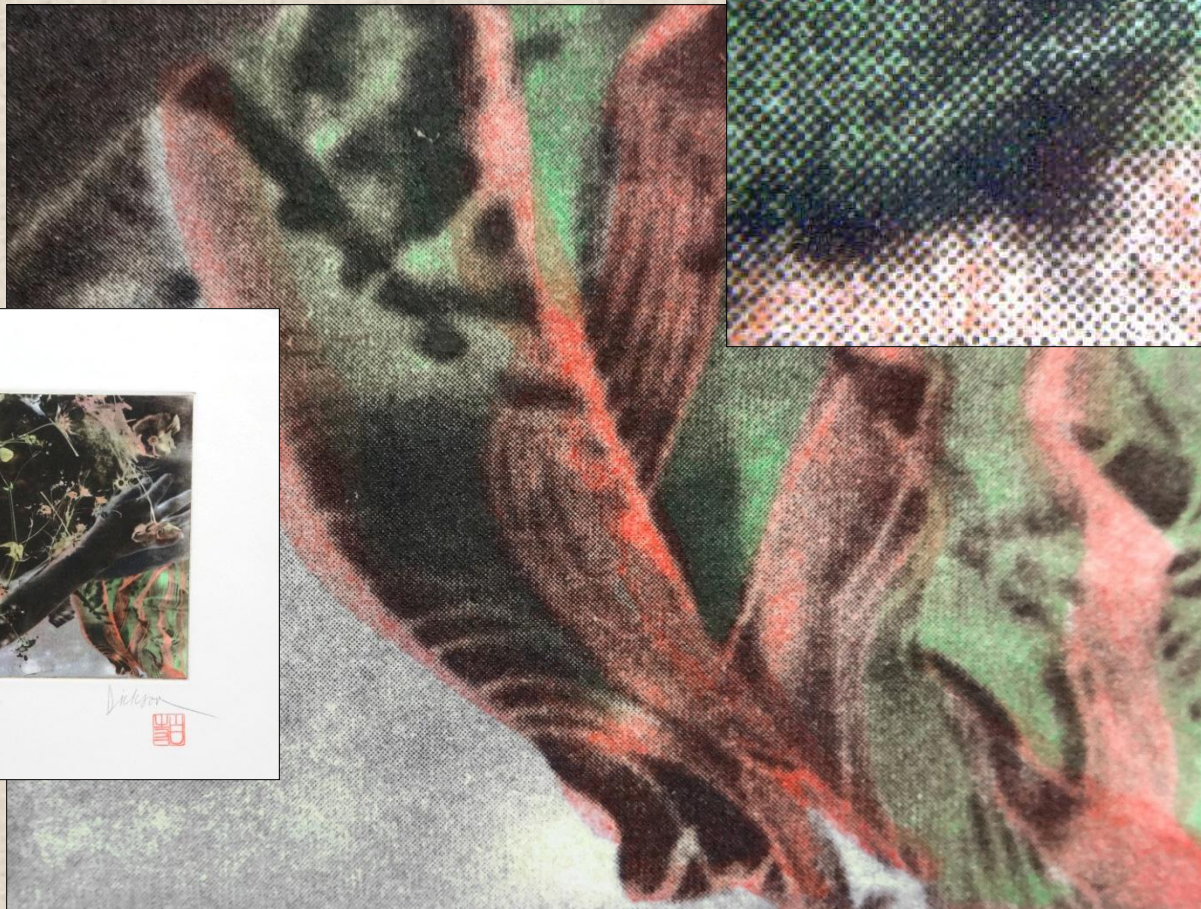# 11 – Stone Lithograph, Offset
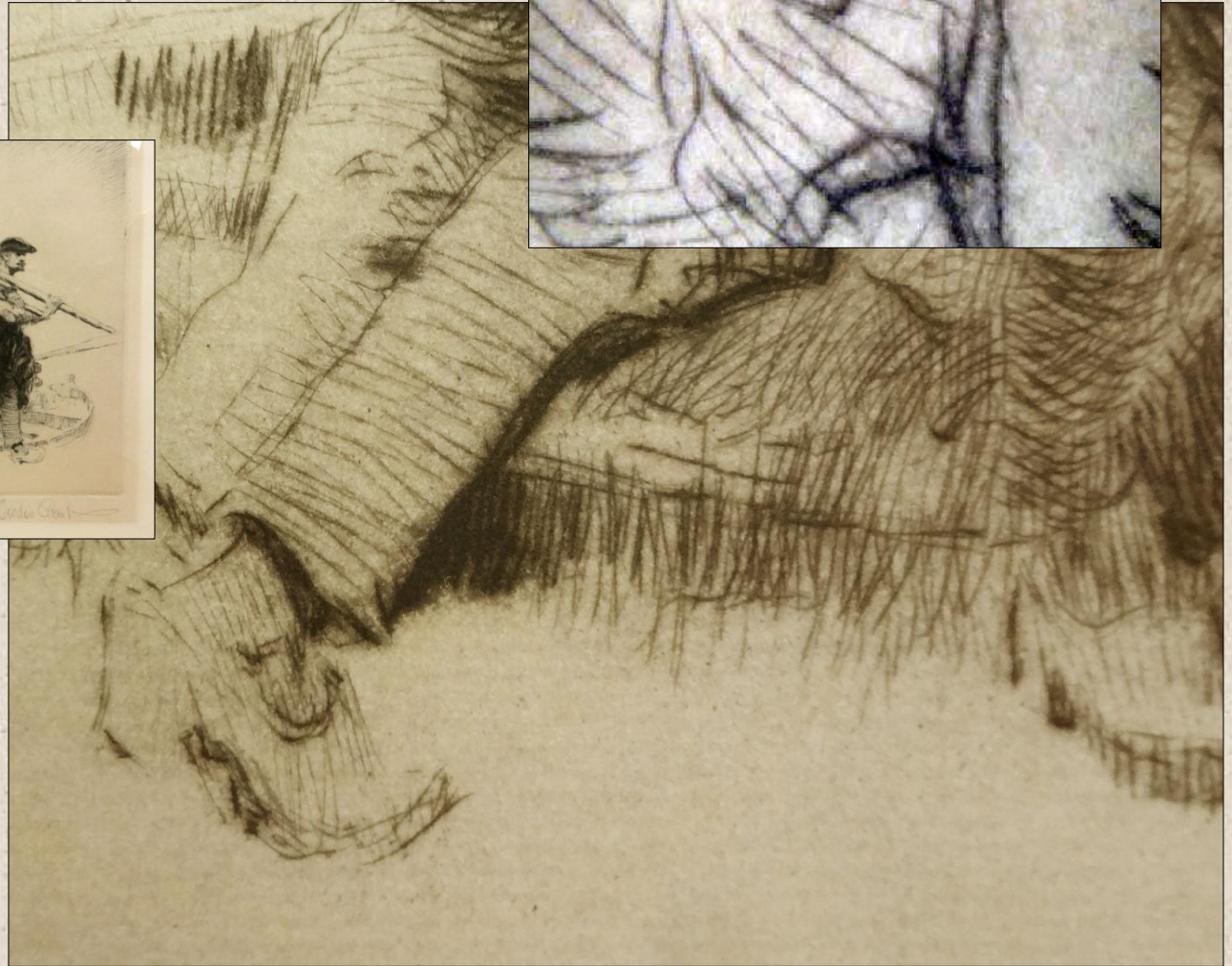
12 – Serigraph/Screenprint

13 – Aquatint

14 – Photogravure, Hand Colored
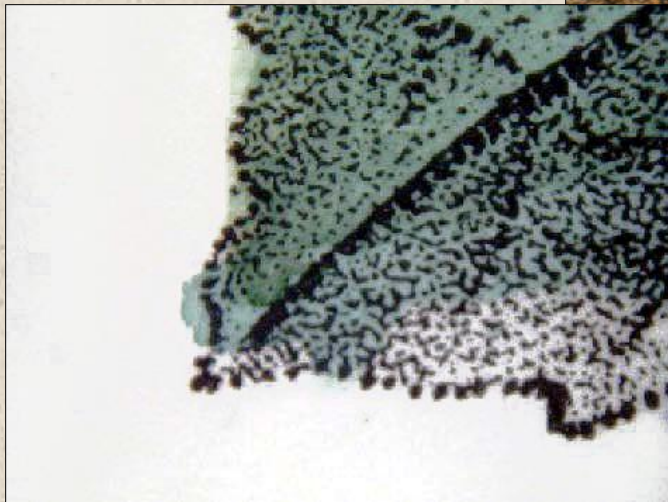
15 – Drypoint

16 – Aquatint, Hand Colored

Resources

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Thank you for attending.

Please bring all art to
front of the room.

Please hand your completed evaluation
forms to the monitor before leaving.