



# Works on Paper: Drawing, Printmaking, Photography

by Sophia



## WHAT'S COVERED

All around us are drawings, prints, photographs, and other two-dimensional works of art made on paper. In this lesson, you will learn in detail about the three main types of **works on paper**:

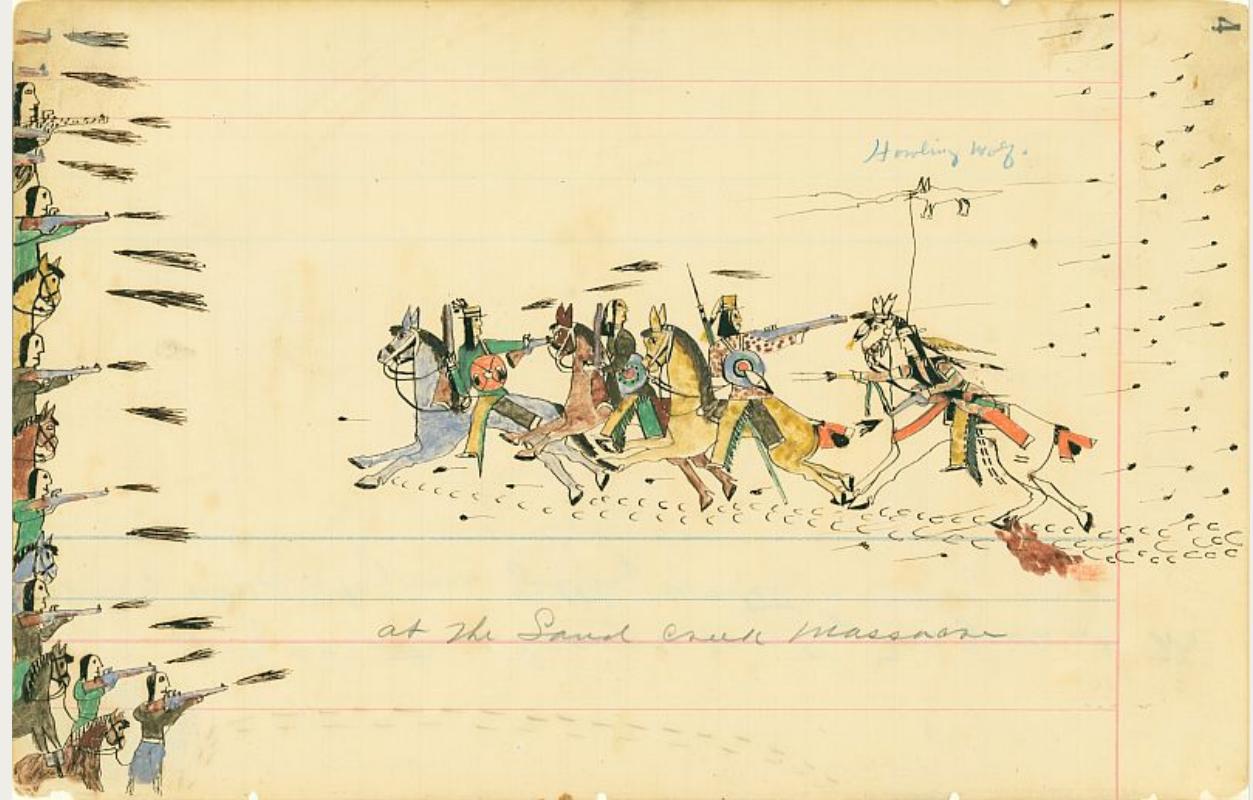
- [1. Drawing](#)
- [2. Printmaking](#)
- [3. Photography](#)

## 1. Drawing

**Drawing** is one of the least technically complicated artistic media. Children learn to draw long before they learn to write; therefore, it is arguably very intuitive for us. It is the easiest to begin. At the same time, drawings can also be quite detailed and complicated. Artists often complete preparatory sketches before making a painting. Engineers or inventors might draw detailed designs for machines or other inventions. Leonardo da Vinci's drawings of war machines are some of his most famous works of art. Pen, ink, charcoal, pastel, and graphite are just a few of the common media associated with drawing.

### IN CONTEXT

The image below is an example of ledger art by Howling Wolf. During the late 1800s, Great Plains Native Americans made drawings using graphite and colored pencils, and crayons. As bison were hunted to near extinction, these works replaced paintings made on animal hides. The artists used accounting ledgers because they were the only source of paper available at the time. These images tell stories of historical events. The work below depicts the Sand Creek Massacre and was made by an eyewitness.



Howling Wolf (1849 - 1927)

*Depiction of the Sand Creek Massacre*

St. Augustine, Florida, USA

1874–1875

Pencil and crayon on paper

Here is an example of a drawing using pastels:



Theodore Robinson (1852-1896)

*On the Cliff*

Brooklyn, New York, USA

ca. 1887

Pastel on paper

Below is one more example of a drawing, this time using charcoal. This work by Georgia O'Keeffe is abstract. While it might resemble some trees, a landscape, or ocean waves, it is not any of those things. O'Keeffe has used the medium of charcoal to create a study of different shapes, tones, and textures.



Georgia O'Keeffe (1887 - 1986)

*Second, Out of My Head*

Washington, D.C., USA

1915

Charcoal on Fabriano laid paper



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Drawing

A work of art made by marking lines, usually with a pen, pencil, or other instrument, on a sheet of paper.

## Works on Paper

Drawings, prints, photographs, and other two-dimensional works of art made on paper.

# 2. Printmaking

**Printmaking** refers to the art of making multiple impressions, usually ink impressions, on paper or a piece of artwork from one physical, original plate made of a solid material, such as wood or metal. These impressions are not considered copies. Instead, they are considered original works of art due to the fact that all the impressions originate from the same source.



### DID YOU KNOW

For some time, printmaking has been a popular form of artwork, and this still holds true today. One major benefit of printmaking is that a single master plate can, in theory, produce an endless number of original impressions.

There are two different types of producing prints:

- Relief
- Intaglio

**Relief** involves an image being carved out of a solid medium, such as wood (a woodblock) or metal. Like an ink stamp, the image rises above the medium. The ink is spread over the raised image and pressed onto a surface, most commonly a sheet of paper, to create the impression of the image.

#### IN CONTEXT

This is a woodblock print by Hokusai. During the 19th century, Japanese artists created highly sophisticated prints using woodblock. They depicted scenes of everyday life and came to be known as ukiyo-e, or images of the floating world. The floating world was the world of the merchant class living in present-day Tokyo. Merchants became quite wealthy yet were excluded from feudal society. Ukiyo-e depict their activities, interests, and lifestyles.



Katsushika Hokusai (c. 1760 – 1849)

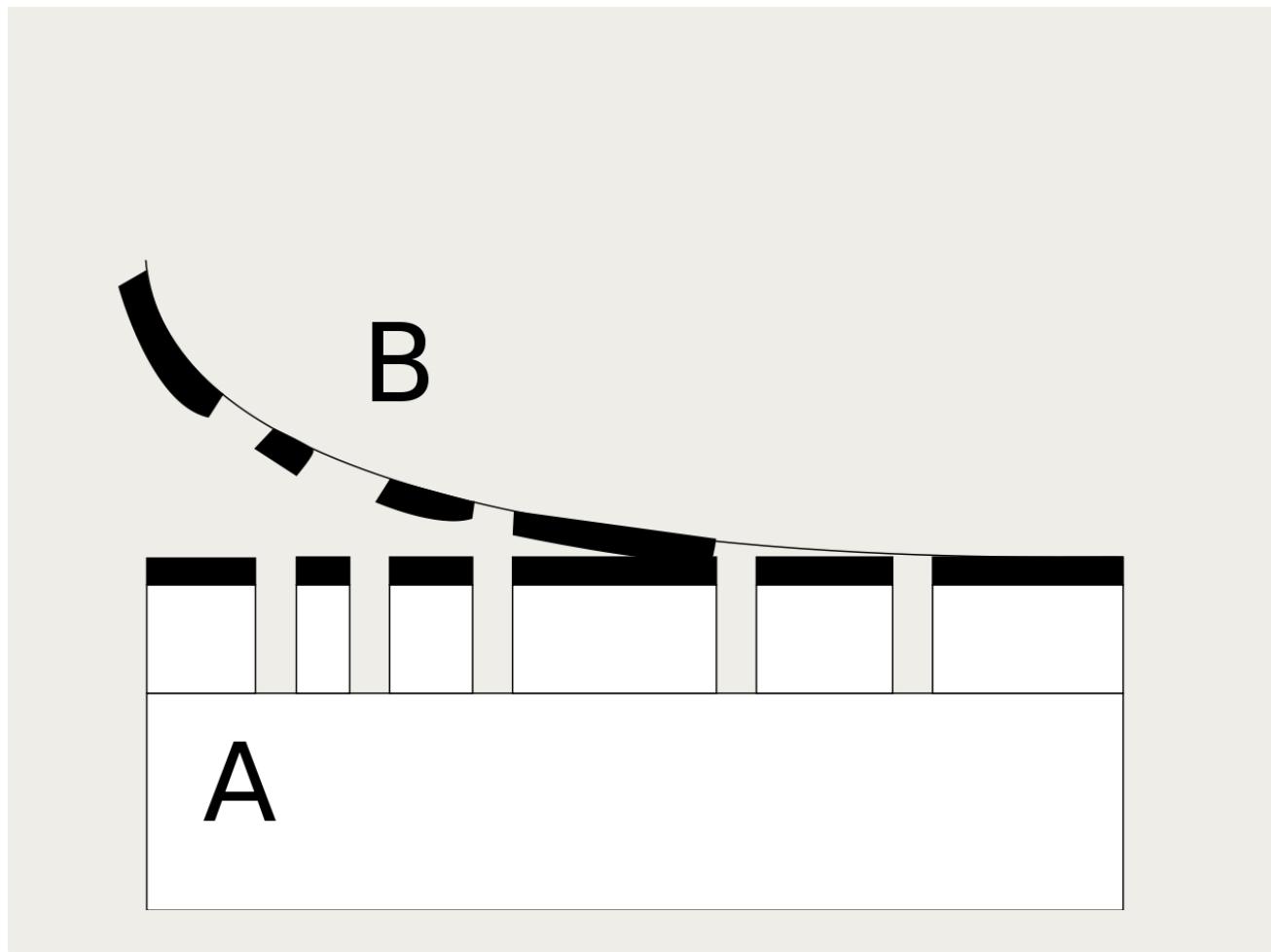
*The Great Wave off Kanagawa*

New York, New York, USA

1830–1832

Ukiyo-e (Woodblock print)

Here is a diagram of how the ink transfers to a sheet of paper. Note how the ink adheres to the block, or matrix, on the areas that are raised. When producing a relief print, the artist carves away the negative space of the print.



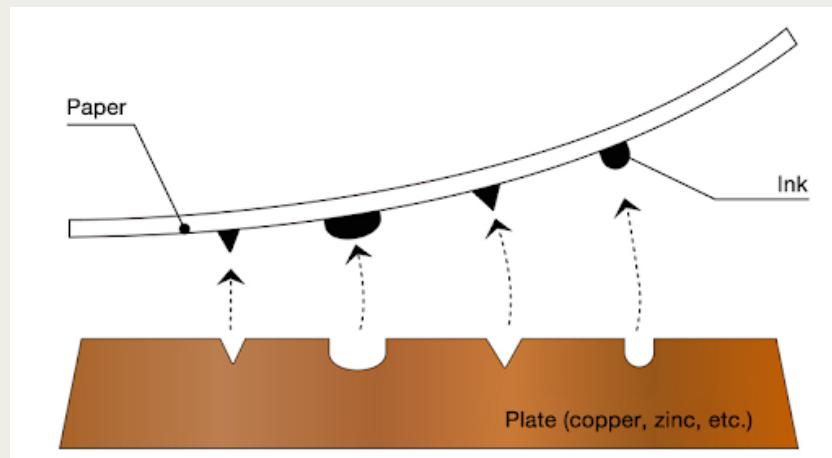
The second type of printmaking is **intaglio**. Even though intaglio produces a similar result as relief, it's a much different process. Instead of being a raised block in relief, the image is carved, or sunken, into a solid medium such as metal or wood. The recesses of the carving are filled with ink, and then the piece of paper is pressed onto the image.

#### IN CONTEXT

With intaglio, the image is carved or engraved into a block, as in the image below. The incised lines indicate where the ink will go.



The incised, or carved, lines on the printing plate fill with ink, and the printing press roller applies great pressure to the piece of paper, forcing it into the incised lines and leaving an image on the paper. Intaglio processes can include engraving, in which the artist cuts lines into the matrix, or etching, in which the artist scrapes a design onto a plate covered in wax and then dips the plate in acid to etch the design onto its surface.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Printmaking

The production of works of art by pressing a sheet of paper against some sort of printing block, often with the help of a printing press.

### Relief

A type of printmaking, such as woodblock, in which the paper comes into contact with the highest parts of the surface of the printing plate.

### Intaglio

The opposite of relief, in which the lowest parts of the printing plate receive ink and the paper is pressed into them. Engraving is a form of intaglio printing.

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## 3. Photography

The third type of work of art on paper is **photography**. The process of producing a photograph looks very different today with digital cameras than it did originally with traditional cameras. **Photosensitive** chemicals, such as silver chloride, which was used originally in this process, react with light to capture an image. The image is then transferred to paper.

The Brazilian photographer Claudia Andujar traveled to the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil during the 1970s. There she took photographs of the Yanomami people. Her photos are some of the earliest of the Yanomami, who had little or no contact with outsiders. Her work often involved her intervention into the process, by using colored filters, putting Vaseline on the lens, or depicting her subject in a way that emphasized the dreamlike state that the Yanomami would enter during their rituals.



Claudia Andujar

Catrimani River

1976



## DID YOU KNOW

The invention of photography meant that people could capture images of what appears to be reality. At the same time, photographers influence their images in many different ways, through choice of subject matter, angle, shutter speed, and many other factors.

Digital photography allows the artist to transform photographs almost completely. The use of artificial intelligence allows artists to create entire images that closely resemble photographs from scratch. For these reasons, the use of technology involved in photography does not prevent this work from being defined as art.



## TERMS TO KNOW

### Photography

Production of images using photosensitive materials on a sheet of paper or metal.

### Photosensitive

Sensitive to light.



## BIG IDEA

Works of art on paper include drawing, printmaking, and photography.



## SUMMARY

In this lesson you explored the three main types of artworks on paper. **Drawing** is a very simple type of artwork, intuitive to us all. Pen, ink, charcoal, pastel, and graphite can be used when drawing. Relief and intaglio are two types of **printmaking**, which is another type of artwork on paper. The third type is **photography**, which has changed drastically over time. Photosensitive chemicals react with light to capture an image that is transferred to paper.



## ATTRIBUTIONS

- [Engraving Plate Example](#) | Author: Maxd2 | License: CC
- [At the Sand Creek Massacre, 1874-1875](#) | Author: Oberlin College | License: Public Domain
- [On the Cliff](#) | Author: Brooklyn Museum | License: Public Domain
- [Second, Out of My Head, Georgia O'Keeffe, 1915, NGA](#) | Author: National Gallery of Art | License: Public Domain



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