

What is the difference between a Print and a Reproduction?

A reproduction is a copy of an original work of art, using some kind of commercial printing technique. For example a Giclee print of a painting on canvas may look like a painting, but isn't. It is a digital copy of the original artwork.

A print is an original artwork. It may be one of a limited edition or it may be unique. If a print is scanned and copied, then the result is a reproduction.

All of prints in this exhibition are original artworks. Some are unique, and others come in small editions. And all of the prints in this section have been lovingly hand-made by each artist.

Print Nomenclature

A/P	Artist proof. Usually 10% or less of the total number of prints in the edition. Often considered to be collectible because APs are sometimes the prints in which the artist has established what the edition should look like.
BAT	Bon à tirer, French for “good to pull” or “ok to print”. This refers to the artist’s perfect print, or standard, to which the master printer matches the rest of the artist’s edition.
C/V	Colour variation. Because prints are hand-made and hand-pulled, there can be variations between prints within an edition due to things like hand colouring. CV signifies that colour variations exist within the edition.
Edition	The number of identical prints pulled from a matrix (plate) or set of matrices. A limited edition has a fixed number of prints and no more. The matrix may be destroyed (or permanently marked) after the edition has been completed to prevent further prints being made.
E/V	Edition variation. Because prints are hand-made and hand-pulled, there can be variations between prints. E/V signifies that such variations exist within the edition. Also written V/E.
I/E	Irregular edition. Because prints are hand-made and hand-pulled, there can be variations between prints. I/E signifies that such variations exist within the edition.
1/20	The first print of an edition of 20. Each of the 20 prints should be—as far as humanly possible—identical.
U/S	A unique state print. Also known as 1/1 or a monoprint/monotype in editioning terms. Unique state prints are virtually impossible to edition, so each is a one-off.

Printmaking Terms, in alphabetical order

À la poupée	A way of inking an intaglio plate so that several colours are applied at the same time using small daubers called dollies. From the French, <i>une poupée</i> , a doll.
Aquatint	A specialised intaglio etching process that yields tonal variations. Traditionally achieved with finely sprinkled and melted rosin. A low-brow alternative is to lightly spray the plate with a fine aerosol paint. The mordant bites the periphery of the myriad spots of rosin or aerosol, thereby giving granulated tones across the plate.
Block	A printing surface, or matrix, of reasonable thickness. Usually used in reference to relief processes, such as lino blocks and wood blocks. Compare the term “plate” used in reference to intaglio processes.
Burnisher	A pointed, rounded and bladed engraving tool used to smooth or scrape away areas of metal on a metal plate. Often used in mezzotints and etchings. The rounded areas of the tool are used to polish (or burnish) texture to a smoother and shinier state that holds less ink.
Chine collé	A French term, describing the inclusion of a collage element (usually made from a thin oriental paper) that is printed and glued in at the same time as the print is pulled.

Collagraph	A combination of the terms “collage” and “graphic”. Describes a print made from a low profile matrix made with collage materials and processes. Depending on the image, collagraph plates may be printed as intaglio and/or relief prints.
Cyanotype	An analogue photographic technique invented by Sir John Herschel in 1842. In 1871 it became known as the blueprint, one of the first commercial reprographic processes. Paper is painted with a chemical solution in dim/darkroom conditions, dried, and then exposed with either a transparency (like a film negative) or under opaque objects to make photograms. The resultant print is characterised by its Prussian blue colouring. (See prints no. 3, 28 & 29 in this exhibition.)
Dauber	A soft, rolled up strip of felt or cotton than can be used to ink up a plate.
Digital print	A print made and/or outputted through digital means.
Double drop print	A print made from multiple impressions of the one plate, each impression inked differently, with the final print appearing to have been made from multiple plates. Often inked á la poupée. Allows for subtle ink colourations, tonal variations and plate tone.
Drypoint	An intaglio technique where the image is directly scored/scratched into the matrix using a sharp tool. The darkness and/or furriness of the printed line depends on the depth of the scored line and the resultant burr. (See prints no. 6, 8-10, 16, 20, 30 & 32 in this exhibition.)
Embossing	A physical impression of the matrix in the paper. An embossing usually refers to a print where the inked print is in high relief on the paper. A blind embossing is an embossing without ink.
Etch	A mordant. An acidic or alkaline chemical that reacts with exposed areas of a plate, with the result those areas are eaten away. Historically acids were used to etch metals. Contemporary etches are less toxic, eg, solutions of ferric chloride and copper sulphate. (See prints no. 2 & 13 in this exhibition.)
Etching	An intaglio technique whereby the surface of the plate is variously protected by a ground/resist or eaten away by a mordant/etch. When inked up for printing, ink remains in areas where the plate has been eaten/etched away, and is transferred during printing, under very high pressure, onto dampened paper.
Etching needles	Any sharp or pointed drawing tool used to draw through the ground (resist) on a plate to expose the metal prior to etching.
Ezycarve	A plastic/rubbery alternative to lino. Excellent for stamping. Inferior for relief printing as it is weaker and more flexible than lino.
Ghost print	A second print, pulled from the matrix immediately after the first print and without re-inking. (Prints no. 14 & 17 also exist as ghost prints. See the sales folder for examples.)
Giclee print	French for “ink jet” print, meaning a digitally printed image.
Ground	A protective waxy or greasy covering that is applied to a metal plate that acts as a “resist”, that is, it resists the etching action of a mordant. Sometimes also called “stop out”.
Hand colouring	The process of applying colour to a print after it has been pulled. Hand colouring is traditionally done with watercolour or gouache, due to the ability of oil based ink to repel water based paint.
Intaglio print	Any print where the ink is held (and transferred) from the recessed areas of the matrix. If you think of a plate as being a mountain range (with peaks, valleys and plateaus) then an intaglio print involves polishing away the ink from the mountainous peaks and plateaus of the plate, so that ink held in the valleys can be transferred during printing, under pressure, onto dampened paper.

Letterpress	A relief process whereby wood and lead letters are hand set and printed to form passages of text with images. The method by which all newspapers, pamphlets and books were produced from the late 1400s to the early 1900s. Now the province of hipsters and fine artists. Need a funky business card or wedding invite? This is the printmaking medium for you!
Lino print	A relief process by which U and V shaped gouges are used to create an image on linoleum, much in the way that a wood cut is made. Linoleum is non-directional and softer than long grain wood, and therefore easier to cut. It is made from cork, linseed oil and hessian, and therefore better for the environment than Ezy carve and other synthetic materials. (See prints no. 5, 14, 17 & 21-27 in this exhibition.)
Litho print	A process whereby an image is made with greasy pigments on a carefully prepared limestone (or other) surface. The process involves chemical reactions that rely upon water and grease repelling each other, whilst grease and ink attract each other. The method by which images were reproduced in books and on posters throughout the 1800s and into the 1900s. Now the province of fine artists.
Matrix	The plate, block or screen that is used to create the print. The matrix carries the information of the print in such a way that multiple copies can be pulled from it.
Mezzotint	An intaglio technique where the metallic surface of the plate is roughened with a serrated rocker to create a surface with a fine texture that, when printed, produces a rich, solid background colour. The image is established by scraping and burnishing lighter tonal areas into the solid colour of the background. Not for the faint hearted. (See print no. 1 in this exhibition.)
Monoprint	A print that is inked and printed in such a way that it difficult to replicate because it is so variable. A <u>monoprint</u> is pulled from a matrix that has pre-existing imagery in the profile of the plate, eg, from a drypoint plate or an etching. A <u>monotype</u> is pulled from a blank matrix. It is possible to edition monoprints, but not monotypes. Some people describe monotypes as prints that want to be paintings. (See prints no. 15 & 19 in this exhibition.)
Monotype	A unique print that is inked and printed in such a way that it cannot be replicated as it is too variable. A <u>monotype</u> is pulled from a blank matrix. A <u>monoprint</u> is pulled from a matrix that has pre-existing imagery in the profile of the plate. It is not possible to edition monotypes. Some people describe monotypes as prints that want to be paintings. Or paintings that want to be prints. (See prints no. 11, 12 & 18 in this exhibition.)
Mordant	Any acid or alkaline chemical that reacts with exposed areas of a plate, with the result those areas are eaten or "etched" away. Historically, acids (such as nitric acid) were used to etch metals. Contemporary mordants/etches are less toxic, eg, solutions of ferric chloride and copper sulphate.
Oil based inks	Inks made with burnt plate oil as the medium (vehicle) for suspending/carrying the pigment. Historically cleaned up with nasty solvents such as turps. Now cleaned up with low toxic solvents such as common vegetable oil.
Plate	A thin sheet of metal, plastic, cardboard, etc that can be used as a printing matrix. Usually used in reference to intaglio processes, eg, drypoints and etchings. Compare the term "block" used in reference to relief processes.
Relief print	Any print where the ink is held (and transferred) from the uppermost areas of the matrix. If you think of a plate as being a mountain range (with peaks, valleys and plateaus) then a relief print involves applying ink only to the mountain peaks and plateaus of the plate. The ink is transferred to paper under pressure in a press or by hand, rubbing with a baren or the back of a wooden spoon.
Relief roll	Applying ink to the relief surface of a relief or intaglio matrix. Meaning the peaks and plateaus of the abovementioned plates and blocks.

Scraper	A pointed, rounded and tri-bladed engraving tool used to smooth or scrape away areas of metal on a metal plate. Often used in mezzotints and etchings. The bladed areas of the tool are used to scrape away texture to a smoother and shinier state that holds less ink.
Scraper board	A thin black art card. The black surface can be scraped and stippled to expose the white underneath. Makes a white line drawing. The reverse process to drawing with black ink on white paper (a black line drawing).
Screen print	A stencilling process using hand-cut or using light sensitive emulsion whereby ink is transferred through a template on/in the mesh of a screen printing frame. Also called serigraphy. (See prints no. 4 & 31 in this exhibition. No 4 is hand-printed from a UV stencil. No 31 is hand-printed from a hand-cut stencil.)
Shellac	A kind of natural varnish, made from the exudates of the lac beetle, that can be used to seal plates before printing. More commonly known as the methylated liquid used to Frenchpolish furniture.
Tipped in	The process by which a small piece of paper carrying a print is pasted on one edge with a thin line of paste to a larger backing sheet with archival paste.
Vinyl print	A synthetic alternative to lino. Excellent for stamping and detailed relief cutting. The plate can be weaker and more flexible than lino.
Water based inks	Inks made with a water soluble medium (vehicle) for suspending/carrying the pigment. Can be cleaned up with water and detergent.
Wood cut	A relief process by which U and V shaped gouges are used to create an image on long grain wood, somewhat like a lino print. Unlike lino which is non-directional, wood has a grain that is easy to cut with and difficult to cut across. Wood cuts are characterized by the appearance of grain in the solids of the print and (sometimes) jaggedy areas where the grain is cut or ripped across.
Wood engraving	A relief process by which engraving tools are used to create an image on end grain wood. It is somewhat like a lino print or wood cut, but is made with different tools on a different surface. Compared to lino prints and wood cuts, wood engravings are often small and highly detailed. English box wood is the block of choice, however, it is difficult and expensive to source. Resingrave and engravers plastic are contemporary substitutes.

** These definitions are variously 'lifted' and adapted from the following excellent sources:*

- Grabowski, Beth & Fick, Bill, *Print-Making, A Contemporary Guide to Materials and Processes*, Laurence King Publishing, London, 2009
- Dyson, Anthony, *Printmakers' Secrets*, A & C Publishers Limited, London, 2009

What is the difference between an ARTIST PRINT and a REPRODUCTION?

There is often confusion between prints and reproductions. If you were to invest a large sum of money on a van Gogh, you would want the real thing and not something with the value of a mass produced poster or calendar. A poster or reproduction may have limited monetary value if signed by the artist, however, a better investment is to buy the original.

A reproduction is a colour copy of an existing artwork made by digital, photographic or machine methods. It can be reproduced at any time, any number of times.

An artist print is an original art work. It has more value than a reproduction. Fine quality prints made by leading artists sell for thousands to millions of dollars. Print collecting is an excellent way to start an art collection. A modest purchase for \$100 can bring pleasure as well as possibly accruing significant value over time.

There are many ways an artist print can be made. The most common forms you may come across are etchings, lino prints and screen prints. Some may include a component of digital reproduction. Regardless of what medium/method an artist uses, a set procedure of professional ethics is followed. Prints are signed and labelled to reflect this.

When making prints, the artist conceives the design, makes the matrix (ie, carves a lino or etches a metal plate), produces a limited edition by inking the matrix and printing on to paper (or some other surface) with a press, a screen frame or burnishing by hand. (The way in which prints are made is specific to the medium used. For example, screen prints may be hand pulled with a squeegee through a screen and onto t-shirts or fine art paper.) Some times the artist works collaboratively with an artisan printmaker to print the final edition. (This is something Union St Printmakers does.) The artist then signs, dates, titles and numbers each print in the edition. At the end of the edition, the matrix is destroyed or marked, thereby limiting the edition absolutely.

The value of an artist print lies in its handmade and limited nature. Each is an original artwork and has a physical presence that shows the hand of the artist/printmaker. They are both tactile and lovely to look at. Which is why many printmakers carefully fix their prints to the wall unframed, so you can get close to their inky-papery loveliness.

** Note: these days, photographic art prints are often digitally reproduced, whilst simultaneously being considered artist prints. If this is the case, a photographic art print will be editioned, just like an etching or a lino print.*

*** This document is derived (with thanks) from a document created by Gallery 54 in Penola.*