

## ART MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUES

### VOCABULARY

The **medium** is the material from which a work of art is made, or it can be considered a standard category of art such as painting or sculpture. (It can also be a liquid compounded with pigment to make paint.)

#### Drawing

Artists may draw for no other reason than to understand the world around them, to investigate its forms. We all draw, and children draw before they write.

- **Pigment**—A coloring material made from various organic or chemical substances. When mixed with a binder, it creates a drawing or painting medium.
- **Dry media**
  - **Pencil**
  - **Charcoal**
  - **Pastel**—A drawing medium consisting of sticks of color made of powdered pigment with a relatively weak binder.
  - **Chalk and crayon**
- **Liquid media**
  - **Pen and ink**
  - **Brush and ink**

#### Painting

The art of painting has been practiced at least thirty thousand years. Paintings are generally full of color, which provides a potent visual stimulus.

- **Encaustic**—A painting medium in which the binder is wax, which is heated to render the paints fluid.
- **Fresco**—A painting medium in which colors are applied to a plaster ground, usually a wall (mural) or ceiling.
  - **Cartoon**—A full-scale preparatory drawing for a fresco or mural.
- **Tempura**—Paint in which the pigment is compounded with an aqueous, emulsified vehicle such as egg yolk.
- **Oil Paints**—nonaqueous medium that can be diluted with turpentine or mineral spirits.
  - **Glazes**—In oil painting, a thin, translucent layer of color; generally applied over another color (e.g. blue glaze can be applied over yellow to create green).
  - **Grisaille** (gree-sye)—A painting executed entirely in gray-scale values, often as a foundation for colored glazes.

- **Alla prima**—Italian for “all in one go.” In oil painting, the technique of completing a painting in a single session, as opposed to building it up slowly over a period of time. This technique rules out such time-consuming procedures as glazing in favor of a more spontaneous approach that often features opaque impasto and visible brush strokes.
- **Impasto**—From Italian for “paste,” a thick application of paint.
- **Watercolor**—A painting medium in which the binder is gum Arabic.
- **Gouache**—Watercolor with inert white pigment added.
- **Acrylic**—A synthetic plastic resin used as a binder for artists’ paints. Also used in the plural to refer to the paints themselves: acrylics.

## Collage

From the French for “glue,” the practice of pasting shapes cut from such real-world sources as magazines, newspapers, wallpaper, and fabric onto a surface. Also a work of art made this way.

## Prints

An image created from a master wood block, stone, plate, or screen, usually on paper. Prints are referred to as multiples, because as a rule many identical or similar impressions are made from the same printing surface.

- **Matrix**—In printmaking, a surface (such as a block of wood) on which a design is prepared before being transferred through pressure to a receiving surface (such as a sheet of paper).
- **Edition**—In printmaking, the total number of prints made from a given plate or block. According to contemporary practice, the size of an edition is written on each print, and the prints are individually numbered with it. The artist’s signature indicates approval of the print and acts as a guarantee of the edition.
- **Relief**—In printmaking, techniques in which portions of a block meant to be printed are raised.
- **Woodcut**—A relief printmaking method in which a block of wood is carved so as to leave the image areas raised from the background. Also, the resultant print.
  - **Registration**—In printmaking, the precise alignment of impressions made by two or more printing blocks or plates on the same sheet of paper, as when printing an image in several colors.
- **Wood Engraving**—Similar to a woodcut, a relief printmaking process in which the image is cut on the end grain of a wood plank, resulting in a “white-line” impression.
- **Linocut**—A relief printmaking technique in which the printing surface is a thick layer of linoleum, often mounted on a wooden block for support. Areas that will not print are cut away, leaving raised areas to take the ink.

- **Intaglio**—Printmaking techniques in which the lines or areas that will take the ink are incised into the printing plate, rather than raised above it. Aquatint, drypoint, etching, and mezzotint are intaglio techniques.
  - **Drypoint**—An intaglio printmaking technique similar to engraving in which the design is scratched directly into a metal plate with a sharp, pointed, tool that is held like a pen. As it cuts through the metal, the tool raises a rough velvety line when printed. Also, a print made by this method.
  - **Mezzotint**-- An intaglio printmaking technique in which the printing plate is first roughened with a special tool called a rocker, which creates a fine pattern of burrs. Inked and printed at this point, the plate would print a velvety black. Values are created by smoothing away the burrs in varying degrees. Also, a print made by this method.
  - **Etching**-- An intaglio printmaking technique in which the design is bitten into the printing plate with acid. Also, a print made by this method. To create an etching, a metal plate is covered with an acid-resistant ground. The design is drawn with a sharp, pen-like tool that scratches the ground to reveal the metal beneath. The plate is then submerged in acid, which bites into the exposed metal. The longer the plate remains in contact with the acid, the deeper the bite, and the darker the line it will print.
  - **Aquatint**—An intaglio printmaking method in which areas of tone are created by dusting resin particles on a plate and then allowing acid to bite around the particles. Also, a print made by this method.
  - **Engraving**—An intaglio printmaking method in which lines are cut into a metal plate using a sharp tool called a burin, which creates a clean, v-shaped channel. Also, a print made by this method.
- **Planographic**—Printmaking techniques in which the image areas are level with the surface of the printing plate
  - **Lithography**—A planographic printmaking technique based on the fact that oil and water repel each other. The design to be printed is drawn in greasy crayon or ink on the printing surface—traditionally a block of fine-grained stone, but today more frequently a plate of zinc or aluminum. The printing surface is dampened, then inked. The oil-base ink adheres to the greasy areas and is repelled by the damp areas.
  - **Monotype**—A planographic printmaking method resulting in a single impression. A typical technique is to paint the design in oil paint on a plate of glass or metal. While the paint is still wet, a piece of paper is laid over it, and pressure is applied to transfer the design from the plate to the piece of paper.
- **Screenprinting**—A printmaking method in which the image is transferred to paper by forcing ink through a fine mesh in which areas not meant to print have been blocked; a stencil technique. Example of this is silkscreen or serigraphy.

- **Computer**

- **Giclee** (zhee-clay)—From the French for “sprayed” or “squirted,” an advanced computer inkjet printing technology in which mists of ink are sprayed at a piece of paper attached to a rotating drum.

## Sculpture

- **Modeling**—In sculpture, manipulating a plastic material such as clay or wax to create a form.
- **Casting**—The process of making a sculpture or other object by pouring a liquid into a mold, letting it harden, and then releasing it. Common materials used for casting include bronze, plaster, clay, and synthetic resins.
  - **Lost-wax**—Also known by the French name *cire perdue*, a technique for casting sculptures or other objects in metal. A model of the object to be cast is created in wax, fitted with wax rods, then encased in a heat resistant material such as plaster or clay, leaving the rods protruding. The ensemble is heated so that the wax melts and runs out (is “lost”), creating a mold. Molten metal is poured into the mold through the channels created by the melted wax rods, filling the void where the wax originally used to be. When the metal has cooled, the mold is broken open to release the casting.
  - **Mold**—A casing containing a shaped void in which liquid metal, clay, or other material may be cast.
- **Carving**—is more aggressive than modeling, more direct than casting. In this process the sculptor begins with a block of material and cuts, chips, and gouges away until the form of the sculpture emerges. Wood and stone are the principle materials used for carving.
  - **Contrapposto**—A pose that suggests the potential for movement, and thus life, in a standing human figure. Developed by sculptors in ancient Greece, *contrapposto* places the figure’s weight on one foot, setting off a series of adjustments to the hips and shoulders that produce a subtle S-curve.
- **Assembling**—The technique of creating a sculpture by grouping or piecing together distinct elements, as opposed to casting, modeling or carving.
- **Relief**—Sculpture in which figures are attached to a background and project from it to some degree.
  - **Low-relief (bas-relief)**—the figures project minimally, as on a coin.
  - **High-relief**—figures project substantially from the background, often by half their full depth or more.
  - **Sunken-relief**—outlines are carved into the surface and the figure is modeled within them, from the surface down.