

Art Terms

Animation art--Artwork produced from animated films; may be described as "cells" referring to celluloid on which such films were produced. Some prints on paper also may be produced from animated cells.

Artist's proof--(This may be pencilled in at the bottom of a print as A/P) Prints outside the standard edition which are intended for the artist's own private collection and use as part of the original artist-publisher agreement.

Cancelling--To prevent further use of a printing plate after an edition has been printed, the artist sometimes "cancels" the plate by X-ing it out or in some other way defacing it. Sometimes cancellation proofs are made. However, many artists who make woodblock or other relief prints save individual blocks and combine them in different designs.

Cartoon art--Original drawings/paintings of cartoonists that were originally produced for newspaper comics or editorial cartoon pages.

Cast paper--Artwork produced by placing wet paper or paper mache materials in a mould and allowing it to dry. The result generally looks like a plaster cast of an image, but is very lightweight.

Chop mark--An uninked, embossed stamp on a print which identifies the printer, artists, workshop or sometimes a collector. Also called a "blind-stamp."

Crafts--Any of a number of items produced using original art techniques are today considered fine art crafts--blown glass, pottery, ceramics, clay pieces, textiles/weavings, wood carvings and other items that are created by artists are original and unique works of art. Some are very expensive and are very collectible.

Documentation--Information available on the edition of a print telling the artist's name, the printer's name, the location of the workshop, the number of prints in the edition, date, etc. Although this is somewhat important in print collecting, the condition of the print usually is more significant.

Edition--The total number of prints made of a specific image and issued together from a publisher.

Giclée--An image that is created or scanned into a computer, then printed on a high-speed ink-jet printer. (The term literally means "spurt " or "spray.") Special inks produce incredibly true colours without the dot pattern associated with offset lithography. With advances in technology, the giclée has continued to evolve, and has become an accepted printing method. The quality of the inks used to print, and the substrate on which the image is printed, affect the quality and longevity of the print. A giclée can be either original art (when the image is created originally in the computer) or a reproduction (when an image is scanned into a computer, then printed.)

Graphic--A term for any "multiple original" work of art on paper. The graphics media includes intaglios, serigraphs, and lithographs. An offset reproduction is not a graphic.

Intaglio--From an Italian word meaning "cut in," intaglio prints are made from images cut below the surface of the printing plate. Ink is forced into these cut-out images and then forced onto the paper in a press exerting great pressure. Intaglio prints include etchings, aquatints, drypoints, engravings, soft-ground etchings and mezzotints. In some processes, the lines are cut out by hand with tools; in others, they are bitten out by acid.

Limited edition--This term refers to the number of objects that are available. In art, a limited edition refers to the fact that the article is one of a number of images in a published edition for which a predetermined number of impressions were from a plate. Once the predetermined number of impressions are made, no more impressions are to be taken, assuring that the

edition is "limited." The number of impressions in a limited edition should be information that is available to the consumer. Both original graphics and reproductions are offered as "limited editions" from artists and art publishers.

Limited edition reproduction--(Sometimes referred to as "offset lithograph.") Art that has been photomechanically reproduced from another medium and printed by one of several methods, often by offset presses. The edition size has been predetermined by the publisher, generally based on the artist's popularity and sales potential.

Original graphics also are "limited editions," but prints produced by original means--and do not exist already in another medium--are considered multiple original prints, not reproductions.

Lithography--Artwork printed from a stone or metal plate or other flat surface. The artist uses a greasy substance to draw on the surface of the plate; only these greasy areas will accept ink. Once the plate is inked, high-quality paper is laid over it and the package is pulled through a press. To create a lithograph with a number of different colours, a number of different plates must be prepared and the paper must go through the press each time a new colour is added. Lithographs are usually printed in editions of several hundred. Each print is considered a "multiple original" because the artist pulled each one from the press, or closely supervised the press operator. Each print is signed and numbered in the margin.

Mixed media--Artists often combine two or more printmaking methods to produce unique mixed-media works. Sometimes collage techniques are added to prints to produce a mixed-media piece.

Monotype--The only type of print that comes in an edition of one. The artist draws or paints on a flat surface, then lays fine paper over the surface and pulls the package through a press. Because no fixed design has been created in the plate, the design can never be exactly duplicated. However, artists can partially re-ink the plate and run it through a press in successive printings, creating a series of prints similar to the original. These are known as "ghost prints."

Monotypes are signed and numbered in the margin 1/1 indicating one print from an edition of one.

Offset lithograph--A photomechanically reproduced image. See "limited edition reproduction."

Open edition reproductions--Photomechanically reproduced images that are published with no restrictions as to the number of copies that will be made. Open editions usually are decorative pieces of art done in current colours, subjects and sizes, printed on inexpensive paper.

Photography--Photographic prints can be made from photographic negatives, positive transparencies or digital images, and printed on a wide variety of substrates, including photo paper, fine art paper and canvas. They can be black and white or colour. Many artists, especially those whose works appeared early in the 20th century, are highly collectible. A number of contemporary artists also specialize in photography.

Poster--This art medium comes from the ancient practice of "posting" messages in public places. Used for advertising or other communication needs, posters were designed to communicate quickly and graphically. Posters are still used for that purpose today--movies, concerts, plays and other public events all are promoted with posters.

However, posters also are produced strictly as decorative art, usually inexpensively on inexpensive paper. Posters almost always photomechanical reproductions; there is always graphic type on a poster, which is the primary difference between these and open edition reproductions.

Vintage posters--those printed 50 to 100 years ago--are highly collectable and have investment value. These often are very large and very graphic, with subject matter ranging from entertainment events to advertisements for products such as tobacco, wine and household items. Many early poster artists have become very famous.

Prints, printmaking--"Print" is a generic term for a single graphic made by a variety of printing techniques. Once the term was applied only to original graphics, but in recent years, produced by offset presses and other printing methods also have been referred to as prints. The techniques used to make prints often are referred to as the "printmaking processes."

Restrikes--Modern-day printings of antique prints. Restrikes can be made from the old plates used to make authentic prints, or they can be made from new plates created just for the restrikes. These prints should be labelled as a restrike, to differentiate them from original antique prints.

Sculpture--Images created in three-dimensional form in a wide variety of materials--clay, bronze and marble are most common. Some sculpture pieces are reproduced from moulds and are considered to be "published" works. Others are unique pieces created entirely by the sculptor.

Serigraph--(Also known as a silkscreen.) Artwork created from a stencilled design worked into a nylon or wire mesh. The design is created by blocking out areas that are not to be printed with a greasy substance applied to the screen, or with paper or other material. Once the design is in place, the mesh is positioned over high-quality paper and ink is pushed through it with a squeegee; areas that are not blocked are printed. A different set of screens--and an additional pass through the press--is required for each colour the artist wishes to print.

When the artist, either alone or working with a master printer, creates the screens and prints the edition, generally several hundred of an image, each print is considered a "multiple original." Some reproductions also are now produced using serigraphic techniques, and are called serigraphs.

Signed and numbered--At the bottom of each print in an edition, the artist pencils in his signature and numbers the print. The numbering appears as one number over another, for example, 15/30. This indicates that this was the 15th print to be signed and that there were 30 prints in all.

States (first state, second state, etc.)--While an artist is pulling proofs of a print, he may make changes or corrections which alter the plate. Each time a plate is changed, it is said to be in a "state."

Unique--In art, this term is applied to original artwork. All original, one-of-a-kind pieces are unique works.

Reference