

from Technique to

# mystique



## About Tandem Press

Tandem Press is one of only three professional fine art presses affiliated with a university in the United States. At Tandem, internationally renowned artists create editions of prints and interact with graduate and undergraduate students as well as the master printers.

Printmaking, is one of the most democratic art forms and is an inspirational and stimulating endeavor. Tandem Press was founded in 1987 and is based at University of Wisconsin-Madison. It is affiliated with the Department of Art in the School of Education, and offers an extraordinary educational experience for collectors and the university community, which is unparalleled at any other university in the United States. Tandem Press is an artistic laboratory where internationally recognized artists undertake creative experimentation. The University of Wisconsin-Madison's stated mission is threefold: teaching, research, and public service. Tandem Press shares this mission by teaching, undertaking research into new and traditional printmaking techniques, and by conducting outreach programs to educate the public about art in general and printmaking in particular. The Chazen Museum of Art is the official archive for Tandem Press, and receives one print from every edition that is created.

Tandem prints hang in museums throughout the United States including The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the National Museum of American Art in Washington D.C. just to name a few.

On an international level, Tandem has participated in exhibitions throughout the United States, Europe, and most recently in China. Tandem continues to receive excellent reviews in leading print journals, and has been reviewed favorably in numerous publications including the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Boston Globe, Art in Print, the British publication Printmaking Today, and Grabado Y Edicion.

## printmaking defined: what is a fine art print?

Fine art printmaking is based on the concept of creating a master plate, known as the matrix. This is used to transfer the image onto paper. Presently printmaking is an art form that has many subdivisions, each of which is an art form in its own right: etching, lithography, linocut, etc. The printmaking process is generally a complex one, using a variety of different techniques, and media, depending on the type of print. Just as in painting, the artist creates different surface textures, color effects, and forms to produce a unique work of art defined by the artist's style and personality.

In most instances the process of transferring or printing the image can be repeated numerous times, creating editions of the same image. Sometimes each individual print is retouched or added to afterwards, making it unique. Other techniques involve using the same matrix but different combinations of inks and colors, also creating unique works (monoprints and mezzotints are examples of such works).

## history of printmaking

In the beginning, before the printing press, printmaking was a medium of communication and was not considered an art form. It was not until the 18th century that prints began to be considered originals and it was not until the 1800s that artists began to produce limited editions and to sign their prints.



Oceans by Jim Dine



Nicola López making a plate.

Engraving goes back to cave art, executed on stones, bones, and cave walls. The duplication of engraved images goes back 3,000 years to the Sumerians who engraved designs on stone cylinder seals. Academics think that the Chinese produced a primitive form of print, the rubbing, as far back as the 2nd century AD. The Japanese made the first authenticated prints, wood-block rubbings of Buddhist charms, in the late-middle eighth century.

## printmaking innovations

### In China

The earliest known woodblock printed fragments are from China. They consist of flowers printed in three colors on silk. They are generally assigned to the Han Dynasty. The technology of printing on cloth in China was adapted to paper under the influence of Buddhism, which mandated the circulation of standard translations over a wide area, as well as the production of multiple copies of key texts for religious reasons.

### In India

In Buddhism, great merit is thought to accrue from copying and preserving texts. The fourth-century master listed the copying of scripture as the first of ten essential religious

## TANDEM PRESS

practices. The importance of perpetuating texts is set out with special force that not only urges the devout to hear, learn, remember and study the text but to obtain a good copy and to preserve it. Stamps were carved for printing prayers on clay tablets from at least the seventh century, the date of the oldest surviving examples. The Buddhist Creed was printed on clay tablets in huge numbers from the sixth century. This tradition was transmitted to China and Tibet with Buddhism. Printing text from woodblocks does not, however, seem to have been developed in India.

### In Europe

Block printing was practiced in Europe as a method for printing on cloth, where it was common by 1300. Images printed on cloth for religious purposes could be quite large and elaborate, and when paper became easily available, around 1400, the medium transferred very quickly to small woodcut religious images and playing cards printed on paper. These prints were produced in very large numbers. Printing emerged as a cheaper alternative to manuscripts until 1440 when Johannes Gutenberg, in Mainz Germany, invented the printing press and movable type. This enabled mass production of printed work.

The greatest change in all aspects of printmaking occurred with the advent of digital technology, which has changed almost all aspects of our world, including the art of printmaking, where the digital is now often incorporated into the prints of leading artists across the globe.

There are four main types of traditional printmaking and each technique influences the appearance of the final print:

**Relief printing** was invented in China where both fabrics and books were printed using wooden blocks at an early stage. Woodblock printing had reached Europe by the 14th century and was much used for producing broadsheets and illustrated homilies. From a European perspective, Johannes Gutenberg is generally credited with the invention of book printing. He was the first printer to use cast lead types and he invented the mechanical printing press. Among artists who have worked with relief printing are internationally renowned figures like Albrecht Dürer, Paul Gauguin, Käthe Kollwitz and Edvard Munch.

**Etching.** The etching press was believed to have been invented by Daniel Hopper (1470-1536) of Affesburg, Germany. Jauques Collot (1592-1635) from Nancy, France advanced the technique by developing the échoppe, the engravers needle. Martin Schongauer was one of the first artists to use the technique. Albrecht Dürer, Rembrandt, and Francisco Goya, gained international fame for their etchings, which reached a much larger public than their paintings. Well-known Scandinavian etchers include Edvard Munch, Anders Zorn, Outi Heiskanen, Palle Nielsen, Lena Cronqvist and Marja Ruta.

**Lithography** is an unusually well-documented invention by German actor and playwright Alois Senefelder in 1798. The technique developed rapidly and spread throughout Europe. It lies at the heart of the modern printing industry and has continued to be used as an artistic medium throughout its history. In 1817 it became possible to print from a zinc plate, and from there color lithography and four-color printing using a raster developed. By the end of the century offset printing had been invented. Artists who have utilized lithography as a medium include Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier, Odilon Redon, Edvard Munch, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Klee, Käthe Kollwitz, Joan Miró and Robert Rauschenberg.

**Silk Screening or Serigraphy.** In 1907, Samuel Simon of Manchester, England was awarded a patent for the process of using silk fabric as a printing screen. Although the use of stencils is one of the oldest creative techniques, its use can be traced back to China and Japan from the 6th century onwards. Several years following Simon's patent, John Pilsworth of San Francisco developed a multicolor process of silk screening called screen printing. The term "Serigraphy", comes from the Latin word "Seri" (silk) and the Greek word "graphein" (to write or draw). Many contemporary artists employ serigraphy—one of the most notable being the artist Andy Warhol.

A full glossary of printmaking terms can be found overleaf.

Year of the Dog #8 by Judy Pfaff



# the process of Printmaking:

Printmaking is a process that typically allows artists to make multiple original works of art. In most cases, the artist creates an image on a matrix made out of metal, stone, wood, or other materials. The matrix is then inked, and the inky image is transferred to a piece of paper, often with a press, to create an original print.



## Monotypes / Monoprints

The terms monotype and monotype describe an image that can only be printed once in its original state, unlike other forms of printmaking. This technique is also the most painterly of the printmaking processes. Typically, the artist will use ink to paint an image onto a smooth surface such as plexiglass, a metal plate or cardboard coated with varnish. She/he will then lay a dampened piece of paper on top of the plate and run both through a press to create a unique, one-of-a-kind print. The artist may also transfer the image by hand, using the back of a spoon to burnish the paper, instead of running it through a press.

## Intaglio Printing

When making an intaglio print, the artist creates an image by using a variety of tools and/or acid to carve depressions in a metal plate (typically zinc, copper, or brass). The artist inks the incised lines and recessed textures of the plate, and wipes the raised surfaces clean. She then places a dampened piece of paper on top of the plate and runs it through an etching press, which uses extreme pressure to force the paper into the inked crevices. The dampness of the paper also helps soak up the ink. Intaglio printing can achieve effects ranging from crisp, clear lines to large areas of deep, velvety blacks.

## Engraving

This process is characterized by sharp, crisp lines that are created when the artist uses a steel tool, called a burin, to carve into a copper, brass, or zinc plate. The deeper the cut, the thicker the line. Tonal areas are created by engraving cross-hatched or parallel lines. The image that results is clear and precise.

## Drypoint

In this process, the artist scratches a drawing onto a metal plate with a sharp needle. Metal burrs that result from the scratching, trap and hold the ink after the plate is wiped clean. This creates a soft, heavy line that is unique to this type of intaglio.

## Aquatint

In this process the artist first dusts the metal plate with varying densities of an acid-resistant powder called rosin that adheres to the plate when heated. As the artist places the plate in an acid bath, the acid "bites" around each of the dusted particles — this technique creates various tones from light to dark when the plate is inked and printed.



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*Guest Curator:*  
Nina Dine

## Celebration Acknowledgments:

Tandem Press coordinates the exhibits at the Dane County Regional Airport. Tandem Press, a self-supporting entity, is affiliated to the Department of Art in the School of Education at the UW-Madison. It shares the university mission by teaching, undertaking research into new and old printmaking techniques, and by conducting outreach programs to help educate the public about art in general, and printmaking in particular. For additional information — [www.tandempress.wisc.edu](http://www.tandempress.wisc.edu)

## Woodcut

In this process, the image is carved into wood blocks whose surfaces run parallel to the grain. Because the grain is resistant to cutting, detail is often difficult to achieve. However, with softer woods, the grain pattern itself is often visible and can be incorporated into the composition of the final print.

## Wood Engraving

In this process, the grain is not apparent in the print because the image is carved into the end-grain surface of a wood block. This allows for much finer detail than woodcuts can offer.

## Linocut

Here, the artist carves into linoleum, which is usually backed with wood for reinforcement. Since linoleum does not have a grain, this method can achieve lines that are curvy and moderately detailed.

## Lithography

The lithographic process enables artists to create images with a wide tonal range, which often results in a look that is similar to charcoal drawing or painting. In lithography, the artist uses a variety of greasy crayons or tusche to draw or paint onto smooth, leveled limestone or a fine-grained metal plate (like aluminum or zinc). The image is then chemically treated with a mixture of dilute nitric acid and gum arabic. This chemical process serves to fix the grease onto the stone and to prevent the other areas from receiving ink. The stone is then sponged with a thin layer of water. Only then is the stone inked. The water prevents the oil-based ink from adhering to the blank areas while the greasy areas readily accept it. The image is transferred from stone or plate to paper by the pressure of the lithographic press.

## Silk Screening or Serigraphy

All serigraphic prints are based on the concept of stencil. The stencil technique uses a thin sheet of impenetrable, durable material with a design cut into it. This is placed over a receiving surface (paper, canvas, etc.). Thus the paint or dye applied over the surface of the stencil only reaches the receiving surface where the design has been cut away. Silkscreen or screenprint is the most commonly known form of serigraphic printmaking. This technique is used in many day to day objects, such as posters, tee shirts, printed fabrics and wallpaper design.



Bruce Crowmer (MASTER PRINTER), Andrew Rubin (MASTER PRINTER), Amy Newell (CURATOR), Timothy Rooney (SENIOR CURATOR), Paula Panzenko (DIRECTOR), Joe Freye (MASTER PRINTER) and Jason Ruhl (MASTER PRINTER)



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