

Printmaking - From Conventional To Modern Approach

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Abstract

The Earliest form of printmaking is often claimed to be the hand impression found on prehistoric cave walls; true printmaking; however has its root in china. Where religious texts were carved on woodblocks and printed.

The Printmaking term is associated with the method of reproduction and itself as an independent art form, due to technical and cultural reason it is always developing. In times of war or economic recession artist have made prints with the most meager of materials: floorboards, ink made from soot and grease and printed on scrape paper by hand. In times of affluence artist have access to expensive technology and assistance of master printers, and thus they can make the most extravagant creations possible. In each case the creative work will reflect the techniques, time and place in which it was made, and thus the print became historical documents as well as a work of art. These all are the initial stage of developing a new art form. Implicit in the foregoing remark is the importance of the print trade to the cause of etching and inherent in this relation was a dilemma.

Key Words –Relief Print, Intaglio, Screen Prints, Lithography, Digital print, Photography, fabric block, Gold Smith, Pattern, Software, Hybrid Print.

Introduction

The Earliest form of printmaking is often claimed to be the hand impression found on prehistoric cave walls; true printmaking; however has its root in china. Where religious texts were carved on woodblocks and printed. The most significant invention to advance the art of printing was that of paper around 105 AD. Also the first made in China, it later spread to Japan and along the trade routes to the west, and was first made in Europe in Spain in 1115 AD. Woodblock were probably first used to print patterns on fabric. By the early 15th century they were also widely used in the making of block books, complete pages of text and illustrations carved from a single piece of wood by expert craver, and printed by expert printers, both were different, thousands of individual prints of religious pictures, popular tales and playing cards sold in local market. In illustrated and decorated books the metal type was printed first and the embellished initial and pictures printed later from woodcuts. The grain of natural wood restrict the fineness of detail that can be cut and illustrators soon turned to the ancient techniques of engraving metal and etching it in acid. These highly developed skills were used to decorate armor, weapon and both domestic and church plate. Goldsmiths and silversmiths sold design patterns for copying in the form of prints taken by rubbing ink into the lines incised on the metal and then pressing it into paper. It was a short step of making illustrations for book in the same way, though requiring different ink and different amounts of pressure, they still had to be printed separately from the type.

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The invention of Lithography in 1796 by Aloys Senefelder(1771- 1834) in Munich of an entirely new way of printing was to provide artist with a marvelously rich and varied

medium through it took another century of fully develop. Senefelder had spent many years trying to refine this lithography medium which is very cheaper too. This newly printing technique is totally based on chemical printing on Lime stone named Lithography which is only available in Bavarian mines in Germany. The demand for colour prints was difficult to satisfy until colour lithography became widespread. Multi block colour woodcuts were more tedious to cut and multiplate etching and engraving equally time consuming and expensive to make. Colour aquatint were printed from two plates and had patches of colour applied to the plate by hand before printing this method of applying ink is called a la poupee. But this was very slow and skillful method.

Lithography could now be used to make larger prints than those available by any other method, though one stone is required for each colour.

For people of the late 19th century, etching was more of an artistic novelty than the steel engravings and chromolithographs with which printmakers grown up. The man and women who championed the medium were mostly artist and not craftsman, and they were using these conventional techniques for creating original works, not just copies. Etching, unlike engraving and lithography was not initially associated with reproduction work. Moreover it had a strong “Old Master” tradition, which was intimately tied to Rembrandt, the greatest etcher in the eyes of the period. Etching therefore, were the product of artistic creation, could be precious. The paper or material on which the print or impression were printed played a significant role in determining the value attached to them by the public.

The tremendous growth of printmaking in the 1960s has been called a print boom. This print boom was fostered by the development of the new printing method of screen printing. Fundamentally this is a sophisticated form of stenciling that had been revolutionized by technological advances in synthetic materials, developments that had occurred largely during the Second World War. As a new technique screen printing was psychologically attractive to artist breaking away from the influences of Paris, where traditional printing methods were still used by many artist, but for a time screen printing seized the foreground.

The Lure of experimenting with newly developed material and techniques has threatened to engulf many printmakers, with the computer being the most alluring of all. It could do things that were previously impossible.

Experimentation for its own sake is arid: old or new methods and materials are only justified if their use enhances the idea or image being conveyed. We are now going through a period of consolidation of the experience gained of new materials and methods and a reappraisal of traditional ways. With the development of the computer in the 1950s through the PC at home in the ‘80s and Internet in the ‘90s there is a shift from the conventional techniques towards creation of concept-led digital art.¹The digital revolution

overtook the art practices with extraordinary speed. Artists quickly grabbed this concept and got involved with print studios in the development of the first digital printer for fine art. Artists who are enthusiastic to experiment with new techniques, digital printing is an alternative form for creative expression. As a consequence, a large number of applications and software were developed in the last few years which clearly demonstrate an impact on all techniques of art, such as printmaking, photography and painting, resulting in an evolution of new ideas.

The invention and continued improvement in the software like, Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter have revolutionized the ways that art is produced by allowing artists to do entire works on the computer.

Computers are no longer an exciting new plaything, but have now become necessity. By these all variations on the basic method are also used as Hybrid, mixed – media and experimental Prints, hybrid prints takes the technology from one discipline to use in or adopt to another, for example would be monotypes, collotypes, collagraphs, collaged prints with some material, printed or not, stuck on to the print, partial digital prints, hand coloured prints, and certain transfer prints. Each method of printing has its own characteristic and sometimes more than one method is needed to release a particular piece.

If the image in the artist mind needs the fineness of an etched line in some parts but also the covering power of screenprinted ink in others, then the combination of etching with screen is logical. Other common combination is lithography and blind embossing, woodcut with linocut, Lithography with screenprinting and relief with etching, etching with serigraphy. Printing on 3D surface whether it is made from cast paper pulp, ceramic, resin or aluminum for this transferable base sheet or to set up a screen printing unit similar to those used to print bottles in industry, printmakers are endlessly ingenious. Experimental prints are a very interesting category on their own.

They are not intended to be edition and are usually one off prints. Some time experimental proofing throws up the unexpected and that image is then edition.

Printmaking will also invariably continue to exist in many forms. From traditional works on paper to be framed and hung on a wall to architectural scale works for public spaces. It will surely also continue to be combined with other forms, such as installation. Videos and book work. Printmaking is always reinventing itself.

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