

## What is a Print?

A print is made by transferring a layer of ink from a printing element, or **matrix**, onto paper or another material, often using a printing press. Prints can be produced in **editions**, or multiple original impressions of the same image.

## Types of Printmaking

**Relief** printmaking, such as **woodblock** or **linocut**, is the oldest method of producing a print. First, an image is drawn on the block of wood or linoleum. The areas around the image are then cut away, leaving raised areas that will receive ink. A piece of paper is then placed on the inked block and run through a printing press.

In **intaglio** printmaking, the image is incised into a metal plate. This can be done manually (as in **engraving** or **drypoint**) or chemically (as in **aquatint** or **etching**). Ink is applied to the surface of the plate, which is then wiped clear of all but the ink that remains in the recessed marks. The paper is dampened so that it will be squeezed by the printing press into the inked recesses of the plate.

**Lithography** gained popularity in the nineteenth century as a cheap and easy method for producing advertising materials. First, the image is drawn on a stone or metal plate using a greasy crayon. The stone or plate is then washed with a chemical solution that etches the areas of the plate not covered with the greasy image. Next, the stone is moistened; water accumulates in the etched areas of the plate but is repelled by the greasy drawing. When an oil-based printing ink is rolled over the surface, the ink adheres only to the drawn image areas. Finally, paper is laid on top of the stone or plate, which is passed through a lithography press for transfer.

To create a **screenprint**, a stencil is placed over a stretched mesh screen. Different stencils are used for each color area of the print. The image is printed in phases by blocking out different sections of the mesh. Printing ink is applied using a squeegee that is drawn down the screen. This process is also called a "silkscreen" or "serigraph."