



**The Print in the North - The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden:  
Selections from The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

**A Resource for Teachers**

**The American Federation of Arts**

***The Print in the North—  
The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden:  
Selections from The Metropolitan Museum of Art***

Contents:



The Exhibition Overview and Information on works of Art are adapted from “The Print in the North: The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden” written by guest curators Suzanne Boorsch, Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Nadine Orenstein, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and published in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, spring 1997. Discussion Questions and Classroom Activities were written by Nelly Silagy Benedek, Director of Education at the American Federation of Arts. The Glossary of Printmaking Terms was prepared by Nelly Silagy Benedek with the assistance of Megan Porcaro.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions about this educator’s resource contact

Nelly Silagy Benedek, Director of Education  
American Federation of Arts  
41 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10021.  
Telephone: 212 988 7700 x26  
Fax: 212 861 2487  
Email: nbenedek@afaweb.org

## About This Resource

The prints in the exhibition *The Print in the North—The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden: Selections from The Metropolitan Museum of Art* capture our attention visually and engage us intellectually. Employing a variety of innovative techniques, many of these works of art challenge the stylistic conventions of their time. Though created centuries ago, these prints possess an immediacy that has not faded over time; they continue to provoke and inspire us.

Works of art can be a great source of inspiration for elementary, middle school and high school students. These materials are designed for teachers interested in integrating works of art from this exhibition into their curriculum. Teachers may use these materials in conjunction with a class visit to the museum or independently. Suggested activities and discussion questions focus on individual works of art and suggest ways of making these works of art accessible to students. Writing projects and drawing exercises in this packet include subjects such as neighborhood architecture, pattern design, portraits, personifications, and narrative construction. These topics are adaptable to different age levels and may be used as points of departure for lesson plans. Sometimes discussion questions are first, other times the activity precedes the discussion, depending on the individual work of art. You may adapt these discussion questions and activities to suit your students' needs. For the drawing projects, encourage your students to focus more on communicating an idea and experimenting with forms than with rendering accurate perspective and correct proportions. Have older studio art students think about rendering three-dimensional form by using cross-hatching and other drawing techniques they observe in the works of art.

The aim of this resource is to teach students how to approach works of art using critical thinking skills. By devoting time to a close study of the visual imagery, students will learn to examine works of art as visual documents that they may analyze and explore through discussions, writing, and hands-on activities. The objectives of the discussion topics and classroom activities are manifold. They are a first step in engaging students in the process of looking at and analyzing works of art. Furthermore, they create links with topics and concepts students are studying in school. Finally and most important, they are designed to encourage students to have meaningful relationships with the works of art and to explore and give expression to the thoughts, ideas, and experiences that are a part of their lives.

## Exhibition Overview

The meeting of the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) and his Netherlandish counterpart Lucas van Leyden (1494(?)–1533) in Antwerp in 1521 brought together two consummate printmakers who were to leave their mark on the development of the medium in Europe for the next century. Dürer and Lucas were the two most important printmakers of their day and represent the culmination of a fifty-year history in which printmaking was transformed from a relatively coarse craft to a refined and noble art. The technology for making prints had actually existed for centuries and was employed for practical purposes such as carving metal vessels and cutting designs into the surface of armor. When paper became available in quantity and at reasonable prices during the fifteenth century, it became a catalyst for the development of printmaking on a more sophisticated level. During the final half of that century, engraving, etching, and woodcut gradually began to move from the workshops of artisans into the studios of painters, sculptors, and draftsmen.

Printmaking, which produces a single image many times over at a low cost and in a manner that allowed for broad distribution, served a very particular function. While the prints in this exhibition are now quite rare, at the time they were produced they were intended to have a wide circulation, similar to today's newspapers. However, like posters or other mass-produced items today, prints in the fifteenth century were often hung on walls for a period of time and then discarded. Consequently, only a small number of these prints have survived.

The production of simple woodcuts, mainly for devotional purposes, was widespread in northern Europe by the mid-1400s, but engraving, which demanded a higher level of technology, began later and was more confined in locality. Originating in the final decades of the fifteenth century in the Upper Rhine region, around Constance and Strasbourg, it spread down the river to what is now the Netherlands, and by 1500 had reached other localities in the German-speaking areas. Because the Italian tradition developed independently of the northern one and France was still relatively isolated during this period, these German and Netherlandish prints from the first century of printmaking form a distinct body of work with its own history. This history can be traced in the exhibition *The Print in the North: The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden*, which consists entirely of prints from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Some of the works of art in this exhibition are among the most famous images of their day, in particular, Dürer's *Adam and Eve* (1504) and Martin Schongauer's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (ca. 1475–80).

The first generation of engravers experimented with various tools and techniques to develop the black-and-white printmaking into a more sophisticated process. Adapting techniques used in metalworking, these artists created the intaglio processes of engraving (cutting lines into a metal plate with a sharp tool) and etching (biting lines into a metal plate with acid). Among the first generation of printmakers, active in the 1430s and 1440s on the Upper Rhine, for example, was the Master of the Playing Cards, one of the first engravers to introduce tone, that is, variations in the frequency and character of lines to suggest shading and differences in hue. He and his followers cut into the copper plate with a sharp stylus, a tool that drew on the surface of the plate rather than carving into it as a burin would, to create works of art that could be reproduced on paper. The parallel lines they employed for modeling forms were similar to those used in contemporary brush drawings rather than those found in metal work.

The process of engraving was refined by German artists such as the engraver known as Master ES, (active about 1450–67) and Martin Schongauer (active from the 1470s to the 1490s). Schongauer, for example, made large works with varied tones that brought printmaking to a new level of sophistication. Utilizing cross-hatching, the technique of producing a mass of perpendicular lines to render varying degrees of shadow, Schongauer created intricate detail that rivaled the complex compositions of contemporary panel paintings.

Schongauer's work inspired the young Albrecht Dürer, who fundamentally changed the conception of prints and printmaking. Dürer engaged in both the traditions of woodcut and engraving, very separate trades practiced by completely different groups of artists. Allowing for fluid lines and complex compositions, engraving had been considered the more refined medium. Dürer elevated the woodcut to the level of engraving by making his woodcuts equally involved and intricately designed. The kind of detail one finds in *Samson Rending the Lion*, for example, was unprecedented in woodcuts by earlier artists. Dürer also used the medium of the woodcut to create imagery rich with ideas and layers of meaning. His decision to focus his attention on prints rather than paintings gave a decisive impetus to the course of printmaking.

Further innovations in printmaking included the technique of etching on a metal plate to create images to be printed on paper and the development of the technique of chiaroscuro woodcut, a major innovation that began about 1508 or 1509. A chiaroscuro woodcut is a woodcut printed in several colors, using a different wood block for each tone in the print. About 1508, Hans Burgkmair, Emperor Maximilian I's chief artist, and Lucas Cranach experimented with color woodblock printing using hand-colored paper, a line block printed in black and tonal areas using silver or gold leaf or inks. These methods were costly, however, and in order for the medium to be available to a larger audience, a less expensive and less time-consuming method was necessary. A system soon evolved of using a black line block and one or two tone blocks in color.

The Netherlands did not begin to be an area where large numbers of active and original printmakers gathered and worked until the 1520s. The most innovative of these, both in terms of his technical virtuosity and his creative treatment of subject

matter, was Lucas van Leyden, who was, as his name suggests, active primarily in the Dutch city of Leiden. Inspired by masters such as Schongauer and Dürer, he looked at the latter's work as a particular challenge, often quoting motifs from the artist and assimilating them into his own stylistic idiom. Lucas was inventive in his depictions of religious and mythological subjects. He often relegated what was typically considered to be the main activity of a narrative to the background of the composition, as in *Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac*. Lucas's compositional devices were highly regarded by northern artists throughout the next century, most notably by Rembrandt van Rijn. Lucas van Leyden was also the first to etch on copper plates, which allowed him to create a single print employing freely drawn etched lines and sharp, controlled engraved ones. This was a marked improvement over the iron plates used by artists such as Dürer and Albrecht Altdorfer, which were too hard for engraving and rusted rather quickly. Lucas was able to combine, for the first time, the precision of engraving with the freedom of draftsmanship that etching allowed.

By about 1550, in the Netherlands and Germany, methods of engraving, etching, and woodcut had become regularized; it was precisely the success of the medium that constricted the flourishing of technical artistry that characterized the previous hundred years. Artists established standardized methods that would yield larger editions for print publishers and focused less on nuance and detail. The Reformation, which first swept through many German cities during the 1520s, also contributed to the end of the preceding fertile period in the development of printmaking. Iconoclastic policies of the reformers were hostile to any form of religious art, and the conflict funneled many artists into the production of propaganda for the opposing sides. The medium of woodcut, which had seen so many bold innovations in color printing during the previous decades, was increasingly relegated to the production of somewhat coarse popular material, such as political and religious broadsheets. Patronage of prints, once centered in courts such as that of Emperor Maximilian, became the province of a private humanist clientele. A new era in the history of printmaking was unfolding in which artistic genius and innovative spirit were directed more than before toward iconographic and market concerns. Less essential would be the technical brilliance and virtuoso touch of artists such as Schongauer, Dürer, Altdorfer, and Lucas, who had elevated printmaking from a craft to an art.

## Selected Works of Art from the Exhibition

### ***Master W with Key*** *Foliate Ornament*



Master W with Key  
Netherlandish, active ca. 1465–90  
*Foliate Ornament*, ca. 1470  
Engraving, 11 ½ x 4 ¼ in. (29.2 x 10.6 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1929 (29.16.1)

The name Master W with Key is derived from the monogram the artist used in his works of art: the letter W with a design that resembles a key. His Gothic leaf design, known only in this impression, is the master's most beautiful and monumental ornament print. More than half of the eighty-two engravings by this anonymous artist—presumed to have been active as a goldsmith in Bruges—represent designs for objects and constructions: Gothic chapels, ornate vessels, altarpiece frames, and saints set within elaborate architecture. Some of the artist's creations were practical in nature, intended to serve as models for fellow artists, but others appear to have been purely whimsical inventions. Master W with Key portrays this twisting, thistlelike leaf with an unusual degree of naturalism, as though he is portraying a person rather than a decorative motif. The typical Gothic decoration seems to take on a life of its own, curling outside the edges of the wall. Nadine Orenstein, one of the exhibition's guest curators, likens the sprig to a saint standing in a niche because of the care the artist has taken to render the leaf as three-dimensional and because of the way the leaf seems to be moving. The nuances of its shadow against the architecture of the niche, for example, endow the form with a strong presence.

**Discussion Questions**

- Ask students to look closely at this print and describe what they see. Does the way the artist has rendered this decorative motif seem unusual in any way? Ask your students to come up with adjectives to describe it.
- Ask students to describe how the artist created a sense of three-dimensional space in this print. How has he rendered shadow and light?

**Activity: Designs, Patterns, and Motifs**

**Aim:** To understand how an artist can create a decorative pattern or motif that is dynamic and captures the viewer's attention.

**Procedure**

Master W with Key made designs that decorated buildings, objects, and frames. Create an original pattern, decorative motif, or design for the purpose of decorating a special object or architectural element. First, think about what you will be decorating. Will it be architectural, in other words, part of a building, or will it be a detail on a small object? If you decide on an architectural element, you may want to draw the outside of the building, such as the façade or front of the building, or part of the inside, like the niche created by Master W with Key. You may also decide to draw a useful or decorative object such as a vase or picture frame.

Draw a picture of your architectural structure or object. Next decide on an appropriate pattern or decorative motif. Make one or more sketches of your motif decorating the object or structure you have decided upon. Notice how Master W with Key created a dynamic image by using his imagination to transform what could have been a simple motionless leaf into something alive and active. Think about how to make your motif or pattern dynamic and interesting to look at.

Finally, include something personal in your drawing such as your name, initials, or a special symbol that is meaningful to you.

**Albrecht Dürer**  
***Samson Rending the Lion***



The Print in the North - The Age of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden:  
Selections from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

A Resource for Teachers

The American Federation of Arts

Albrecht Dürer

*Samson Rending the Lion*, ca. 1497–98

Woodcut, 16 x 11 7/8 in. (40.6 x 30.2 cm)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Gift of Georgiana W. Sargent, in memory of John Osborne Sargent, 1924 (24.63.111)

As a printmaker, Dürer's work is best known for the technical virtuosity he achieved in his woodcuts. The sophistication one sees in the artist's rendering of detail and in the subtle gradations of tone in *Samson Rending the Lion* was unprecedented. Each tapered black line in the print was formed in the woodblock by chipping away the wood on either side of the intended line so that the design was in relief, or raised from the surface. In this print, Dürer shows Samson prying open the lion's mouth as he sits on his back. Dürer's depiction of his figure's powerful movements and the complexity and fluidity of his line underscore this dramatic moment in the biblical narrative.

**Activity: Attention to Details**

**Aim:** To understand the richness and complexity of Dürer's work by observing his attention to detail, and to see how this detail enhances the drama of the narrative.

Procedure

- Project the slide of this work and have your students look at it for one minute. Then shut off the projector and ask them to make a quick list of what they noticed in the image. Ask them to try and remember as many details as possible.
- Project the image again and have students read aloud from their lists. Draw their attention to what they observed and what they may have missed.
- Ask your students what they notice now that they have shared their observations with one another.

**Discussion Questions**

- Discuss how Dürer has created a dramatic and powerful image. Point out the compositional placement of the struggle between Samson and the lion in the foreground of the composition, the expression on Samson's face, and the relationship between Samson's figure and the lion's form. With regard to the latter, ask students to find lines in the animal's form that mirror or correspond to lines in Samson's figure. For example, note the manner in which the lion's tail outlines Samson's back or the way Samson's left leg follows the curve of the lion's leg.
- Discuss how Dürer has established relationships among, the foreground, middleground, and background of his composition. Ask students to find shapes or lines in the print that the artist has repeated. For example, the curve of the bottom of Samson's right sleeve mirrors the smaller shape of the sail on the boat behind it, the vertical form of the tree on the far left parallels Samson's right forearm, and the curvilinear lines at the end of the lion's tail echo the branches of the tree that jut out from the cliff above.



**Activity: Finding Meaning in Personifications and Attributes**

Aim: To understand Dürer's use of personification and attributes and how they relate to the content of this particular work.

Procedure

- Ask students to look closely at the figure of the woman and then write a short paragraph from her point of view. The narrative should be in the first person and in the form of a journal entry. Ask them to write what they imagine she is thinking, taking into consideration her pose, facial expression, and the environment around her.
- Ask some of your students to read their observations aloud. Discuss how their ideas are similar and/or different from one another.

**Discussion Questions**

- Discuss how artists like Dürer use a person to stand for an idea or emotion. Ask your students to think of other examples of how we use a person or object to symbolize or communicate an idea.
- During the artist's time, certain personifications (people that represent an idea) and attributes (objects associated with a person or idea), would have been immediately recognized by people who looked at their works of art. Ask your students to try and figure out the idea or ideas Dürer is expressing in *Melencolia I*. Have them think about the emotions expressed by the figure and the ideas represented by the objects surrounding her. After your students have made their observations, note the references to geometry and explain how artist's considered geometry to be the foundation for artistic creation.
- Ask your students to think of objects that might be considered attributes today.

**Lucas van Leyden**  
***Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac, 1517–19***



*Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac, 1517–19*  
Woodcut, 11 1/2 x 8 5/8 in. (29 x 21.8 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925 (25.2.63)

In this medium, traditionally recognized for its sharp contrasts, Lucas van Leyden creates a soft flowing effect similar to that produced in his engravings. Abraham, whom God had commanded to make an offering of his son in order to prove his devotion, is shown looking sadly at Isaac as they make their way to the scene of the sacrifice. Isaac carries a jug of coals and the sticks for the sacrifice, unaware of what is about to transpire. Relegated to a mountaintop in the background is the moment of high drama when the angel stays Abraham's hand, which is poised to strike Isaac with the sword.

**Discussion Questions**

- Have your students look at Lucas van Leyden's *Abraham Going to Sacrifice Isaac*. Ask them to describe what they think the narrative is about.
- Relate the biblical narrative to your students. Ask them to explain how Lucas has decided to portray the story. For example, what is happening in the foreground? In the background? Discuss how the artist has shown more than one moment in time in a single work of art.
- Compare this print with Dürer's *Samson Rending the Lion*. Ask your students to compare the ways in which each artist has depicted the dramatic moment in their respective narratives. Note what each artist has chosen to put in the background and foreground of his composition.

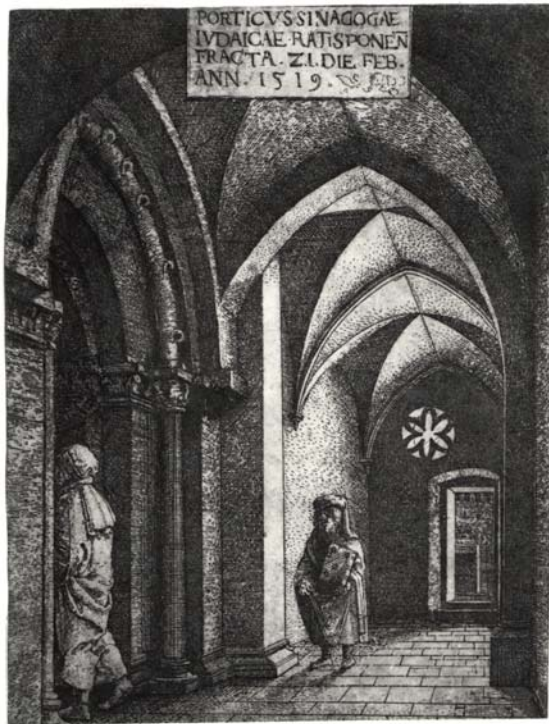
**Activity: Constructing a Narrative**

**Aim:** To understand how an artist's choices determine how the viewer reads a narrative.

### Procedure

- After discussing the work of art, choose a story your class is studying as a group, such as a historical narrative or a literary work, or give your students the option of choosing their own story. This story will be the basis for a drawing. (Younger students will be making one drawing, older students, two.)
- Have your students write a version of the story.
- Ask them to think about which portions of the narrative they will want to include in their drawing and which aspects of the story they will want to emphasize.
- When they have made these choices, have your students make a drawing of one or two scenes in their narrative. Ask them to emphasize one of the scenes in some way. For older students, have them place the main action in the foreground. For younger students focus on merely depicting two scenes simultaneously.
- If your students have all worked on the same story, have them compare their drawings and discuss how they are similar and/or different from one another. If they worked on different stories ask them to share their narratives with the rest of the class.
- For the older students, the second drawing involves changing the compositional placement of the two scenes they depicted in their first drawing. For their second drawing, ask them to place the main action in the background, as Lucas van Leyden did. Display the sets of two drawings and have your students compare their own and their classmates' first and second interpretations. How are the two versions different from one another in terms of their impact on the viewer?

**Albrecht Altdorfer**  
***The Entrance Hall of the Regensburg Synagogue***



Albrecht Altdorfer  
German, ca. 1480–1538  
*The Entrance Hall of the Regensburg Synagogue*, 1519  
Etching, 6 1/4 x 4 3/8 in. (15.9 x 11.1 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 (26.72.68)

In the muted light of an open doorway and rosette window, two Jewish men are shown walking through the entry porch of the Regensburg Synagogue. This etching is one of two that Altdorfer made of the synagogue in Regensburg just before it was destroyed on February 22, 1519. Emperor Maximilian had long protected the Jews in the imperial cities in exchange for substantial taxes, but, within weeks of his death, the Jewish community, which was blamed for the city's economic troubles, was expelled. Altdorfer, a member of the Outer Council, was one of those chosen to inform the Jews that they had two hours to empty out the synagogue and five days to leave the city.

The date of the demolition inscribed at the top of the print suggests that Altdorfer made the preparatory sketches, as well as the etching themselves, with the knowledge that the building was to be destroyed. The prints appear to have been quickly produced, quite possibly during the five days prior to the synagogue's destruction. The plate was not evenly etched, particularly in the areas of dense hatching, where the individual lines lose clarity. In addition, the slightly tipped vaults appear to have been traced freehand rather than with a compass. Although seemingly a sensitive portrayal, this etching was not intended as a sympathetic rendering of an aspect of Jewish culture but rather as a dispassionate recording of a site. This is the first portrait of an actual architectural monument in European printmaking.

**Discussion Questions**

- Ask your students to describe the interior of this building. Note the arches and high ceiling.
- How has the artist created a sense of depth in the work? How has he depicted gradations of light and dark?

**Activity: Designing a Building**

Aim: To observe how an artist renders an architectural structure in a print and to create an original architectural drawing inspired by direct observation.

Procedure

- Ask your students to find other images in this exhibition that incorporate architecture. Observe which architectural elements the artists have decided to include in their works.
- If possible, go for a walk around your neighborhood and look for interesting buildings. You may also choose to go on a class trip to an historic house or architectural landmark. Have your students observe the architecture at the site you have chosen and ask them to make a drawing inspired by what they see. Before they begin drawing, ask them to consider whether they will focus on the entire façade, for example, or on a detail of the building.

**Barthel Beham**  
***Leonhart von Eck***



Left: *Leonhart von Eck*, 1527  
Engraving (first state of two), 4 3/8 x 3 1/4 in. (10.9 x 8.2 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1981 (1981.1087)

Right: *Leonhart von Eck*, 1527  
Engraving (second state of two), 4 3/8 x 3 1/4 in. (11 x 8.2 cm)  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.90.2)

Shortly after his arrival at the Bavarian court in Munich, Beham made this engraving of Leon von Eck (1480–1550), chancellor to Duke Wilhelm IV. These two slides show markedly different first and second states (a state change occurs every time the artist makes an addition to or a subtraction from the plate). In the first state of the print, von Eck, aged forty-seven, wears the type of simple skullcap often worn by scholars. In the second state of this print, Beham made several prominent changes to the copper plate, most noticeably dressing von Eck in a fur coat and adding a wide-brimmed beret over his skullcap. Making these alterations forced Beham to re-engrave the inscription in order to accommodate the broader hat; the faint traces of his erasures can still be distinguished. These adjustments probably reflect the different audiences for the impressions of the first and second states. Whereas the first version was probably made for von Eck's private use, to be sent to family and friends, impressions of the image showing the chancellor wearing expensive formal attire—a fur coat and not one but two hats—were clearly intended for public and official distribution by the sitter.

**Discussion Questions**

- Ask your students to compare the two images. How are they similar? How are they different? Have your students find as many changes as they can in the print's second state.
- Ask your students to think about how the artist had to alter certain areas of the image in order to accommodate his changes. Note the way the inscription at the top is different.
- Discuss how an artist can make changes in the first and second state of a print by making changes to the copper plate.

### **Activity: Portraits**

**Aim:** To understand how an artist can create a portrait of someone and then make changes in a second version in order to communicate a different meaning or message.

#### Procedure

- Ask your students to draw two portraits of someone they know. You may want them to draw portraits of one another in class or do a portrait of someone in their family at home.
- In their first portrait, ask your students to create an image that shows the person the way they would be dressed at home or when they are with their friends. They may draw the person's entire figure or just focus on their face. You might also want to suggest that they show the person surrounded by things that are important to them.
- For their second portrait, ask your students to depict the person in the same pose but dressed for a special occasion.
- Compare the two portraits. How are they different from one another? How have the changes made in the second version affected the appearance of the subject?

### **Printmaking Activities for the Classroom**

Following are suggested activities for teachers who would like to introduce basic concepts about printmaking to their students.

#### **1. Activity: Understanding Relief Printing**

**Age Level:** Elementary school students

**Aim:** To understand how relief printing involves printing from a raised surface.

**Materials:** Fome-Cor cut into shapes, large sheets of cardboard or Fome-Cor, glue, X-Acto knife (for the teacher's use), roller, water-based printmaking ink, paper.

#### Procedure

- Have students draw large simple shapes on a sheet of paper.
- Teachers should do all of the cutting for this activity. Place the students' drawings over sheets of Fome-Cor and cut out pieces of Fome-Cor in these abstract shapes.
- Have students arrange and glue the shapes to a piece of cardboard or Fome-Cor.
- Instruct students on how to use the roller. Have them apply ink to the raised pieces of Fome-Cor using the roller.
- Have students press a sheet of paper onto the inked surfaces.
- Explain how the final effect is similar to a woodcut but how the process of carving an actual woodblock involves cutting away the areas around the main design.

#### **2. Activity: Understanding the Intaglio Process**

**Age Level:** Middle school and high school students

**Aim:** To understand the intaglio process (using modern materials) and to produce a print using this process.

**Materials:** Plexiglas, etching needles, paper, brayers, wooden spoons, water-based ink or paint

#### Procedure

- Make sure that students are closely supervised when using sharp tools.
- Have students do a drawing.
- Have them place a sheet of Plexiglas on the drawing.
- Instruct students to trace the drawing on the surface of the Plexiglas slowly and carefully with an etching needle.
- Have them use brayers to roll water-based paint on the Plexiglas surface and then wipe the surface with a paper towel.
- Have students dampen a sheet of paper and use a wooden spoon to press the paper on top of the Plexiglas to print the design.

For more printmaking activities see the school printmaking activities and bibliography in John Ross, Clare Romano, and Tim Ross, *The Complete Printmaker: Techniques, Traditions, Innovations*, edited by Roundtable Press, Inc. (New York: The Free Press, 1990), pp. 329–46.

## Glossary: Printmaking Materials and Techniques

Words in bold are included in the glossary.

### *Biting*

Biting is the action of the acid on a steel plate that is immersed in an acid bath; the acid bites into the areas on the plate that are not covered by a protective **ground**.

### *Burin*

A short steel tool used in engraving (also called a graver) ending in a point with a wooden handle at the other end. The rounded handle is held against the palm and used to cut into the engraving plate.

### *Burnisher*

A tool used in **etching** and other metal plate techniques for smoothing and polishing the surface of the plate in order to remove extraneous marks.

### *Burr*

In **drypoint** and **engraving**, the rough edges of the metal that rise on either side of the incision made by the tool cutting across the metal surface. Created by a needle or **burin**, this ridge is preserved in drypoint, producing a softened line, and scraped off in engraving, for a more defined line.

### *Chiaroscuro woodcut*

A **woodcut** printed from several blocks to produce a single color print incorporating the effects of light and shadow (chiaroscuro). A key block is usually printed in the darkest tone, followed by the tint or tone blocks, which are inked and printed in various tonal gradations.

### *Dabber*

A tool, covered in leather, used to apply ink to a **woodblock** or **intaglio** plate.

### *Drypoint*

A form of **intaglio** printing in which lines are scratched directly into a copper or zinc plate with a sharp needle. The process leaves a burr or ragged edge that, in the print, appears as a soft, thick line.

### *Engraving*

A form of **intaglio** printing in which a tool called a **burin** is used to incise lines into a metal plate. Ink is then applied to the surface of the plate with a roller, filling the incised lines. The surface is then wiped clean and ink remains where the lines were incised. Dampened paper is placed over the plate and both are then pulled through a printing press. Padding laid on top of the paper creates pressure causing the ink to adhere to the paper as it passes through the press.

### *Etching*

A method of incising lines into a metal plate in order to print in the **intaglio** technique. A stylus or needle is used to incise the plate, which has been covered with an acid-resistant coating. After the incised lines have exposed areas of the metal plate, the plate is immersed in an acid bath, allowing the acid to **bite** into the incised lines. Repeating the process allows the acid to bite deeper into the design. Certain areas of the design may be covered or **stopped out** by using a coating of varnish. (The deeper lines will print darker.)

### *Ground*

In **etching**, an acid-resistant substance that protects areas of the plate from the corrosive action of the acid.

### *Intaglio*

One of the three major categories of printmaking techniques (in addition to **relief** and planographic printing) characterized by printing areas that are recessed. Intaglio

techniques include **drypoint**, **engraving**, and **etching**. In intaglio printing, a design is etched or engraved onto a plate, which is then covered with ink and wiped clean, leaving ink only in the incised areas. An impression is made directly onto the paper.

*Matrix*

The surface on which the artist makes the images that will be inked and printed.

*Metal cut*

The opposite of **intaglio** printing, metal cut is a form of **relief** printing. Because the lines are cut in relief, the surface, rather than the design, is inked in a manner similar to a **woodcut**, rather than an **etching** or **engraving**.

*Print*

An image inked onto paper that has been taken from an engraved plate, **woodblock**, silkscreen, stencil or **lithographic** stone and is one of multiple copies.

*Printing Plate*

The metal sheet on whose surface a design is etched or engraved and eventually printed.

*Proof*

An impression of a print as a test.

*Relief*

A printing technique in which the image is printed from the raised part of a carved or etched block. Relief printing is the opposite of **intaglio** printing because the nonprinting areas of the block are carved or engraved away leaving the lines to be printed on the surface. The surface is inked with a **dabber** and the ink is transferred to paper either by hand or in a press.

*Resist*

Sometimes called an acid resist, the material that is used in printmaking to block out the effects of an acid bath, so that certain areas of the plate are not incised.

*State*

An impression taken from a plate or block in a stage before those to be printed for the regular edition.

*Stopping out*

In **etching** and **aquatint** the application of a **resist** to the surface of the plate during the printing process in order to protect an area from further **biting** during repeated immersions in an acid bath.

*Support*

In printmaking, the material (typically paper) to which the image is transferred from the inked **matrix**.

*Woodblock*

Also called woodcut block, the surface on which an artist carves out a design in relief.

*Woodcut*

A **relief** printing technique in which a print is made from a block of wood by carving the surface so that the design stands out. Woodcut is different than **wood engraving** in that the wood used to create the original design is cut lengthwise along the grain rather than against it. The drawing is executed on a smooth block of softwood and, like wood engraving, the areas around the design are carved out. A sheet of paper is placed over the inked block, and pressure is applied either by using a **dabber** or by placing the block and paper in a press. (Today, woodcuts are inked with brayers, a type of roller, whereas prior to the nineteenth century leather dabbers were used.)

The sources listed under **Select Bibliography and Web Resources** were used to prepare this glossary.

## **Select Bibliography and Web Resources**

### Bibliography

Lambert, Susan. *Prints: Art and Techniques*. London: V&A Publications, 2001.

Lucie-Smith, Edward. *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art Terms*. London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1988.

Mayer, Ralph. *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques*. (Second edition). New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.

Ross, John, Clare Romano, and Tim Ross. *The Complete Printmaker: Techniques, Traditions, Innovations*. Edited by Roundtable Press, Inc. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

### Web Resources

[www.iwc.com/gallery/print.html](http://www.iwc.com/gallery/print.html)

[www.masterworksfineart.com/glossary.htm](http://www.masterworksfineart.com/glossary.htm)

[www.clemusart.com/museum/collect/prntglos.html](http://www.clemusart.com/museum/collect/prntglos.html)

[www.ukans.edu/~sma/print09a.html](http://www.ukans.edu/~sma/print09a.html)

[www.sfonlinearts.com/Printmaking.htm](http://www.sfonlinearts.com/Printmaking.htm)

[www.moma.org/whatisaprint/flash.html](http://www.moma.org/whatisaprint/flash.html)

## **Further Reading**

For information about the history of printmaking see:

Gilmour, Pat. *Artists in Print*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1981.

Hind, Arthur M. *A History of Engraving and Etching, from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the Year 1914*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1923. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923. Dover reprint 1963.

Landau, David, and Peter Parshall. *The Renaissance Print 1470–1550*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994.

Mayor, A. Hyatt. *Prints and People: A Social History of Printed Pictures*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Wolfe, Diane Ewan. *Prints about Prints*. New York: Martin Gordon, Inc., 1981.