

prints



what is an original print



PRINT COUNCIL OF AMERICA 2001-1991

527 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

What is an Original Print?

a non-profit organization fostering the creation, dissemination, and appreciation of the printed word
new and old

1967-68

Principles recommended by the PRINT COUNCIL OF AMERICA

Alan E. Johnson, Treasurer
Theodore J. H. Gustin, Executive Secretary

Edited by JOSHUA BINION CAHN

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Introduction**ORIGINAL PRINTS**

The purpose of this booklet is to provide an introduction to the appreciation of prints made by artists—variously called original prints, fine prints, or artist prints. The booklet tells something of the history of printmaking, outlines the processes and techniques, and distinguishes between original prints and fraudulent reproductions.

What are original prints? It is difficult to give an inclusive definition which could cover every possible example, largely because several meanings have been attached to the words **original print**. In one sense, an original print is the one which the artist himself has both designed and executed, in distinction to a "reproductive print" which another craftsman has executed after the artist's design. In another sense, however, the original print can mean the first appearance, the primary creation, or the authentic form, as opposed to the copy or facsimile of the same (usually made by photomechanical means).

In the past, many, though not all, of the masterpieces of printmaking were original prints, designed and executed by the great artists of the time. The prestige acquired by original prints and the difficulty of defining them has enabled some unscrupulous dealers and auction houses to pass off photomechanical and other reproductions of old and new works as original prints.

To discourage or to take legal action against such fraud and misrepresentation, it is useful to have a valid definition of the original print in order that it may be distinguished from its counterfeit. The following definition (set in legal terms) of the original print, as it is made today, has been accepted in principle by the Customs Division of the U.S. Treasury Department, the French Chambre Syndicale de l'Estampe, and the International Association of Plastic Arts affiliated with UNESCO:

What is an original print?

An original print is a work of art, the general requirements of which are:

1. The artist alone has created the master image in or upon the plate, stone, woodblock, or other material for the purpose of creating the print.
2. The print is made from the said material by the artist or pursuant to his directions.
3. The finished print is approved by the artist.

Such a definition concerns the layman and collector more as a protection against deceptive fraud than as a touchstone for the selection and valuation of prints.

The thoughtful collector must constantly bear in mind that **quality**—in other words aesthetic merit—is the most important criterion in judging the print as a work of art, and that the issue of originality, as defined above, is not always relevant. An original print by a third-rate artist is beyond any doubt worth less in every respect than an original print by a great artist, because a print may be unimaginative, undistinguished, mediocre in design and incompetent in execution, and still be classified as an original print.

Furthermore it should be stressed that in the past certain "reproductive prints," which of course do not conform to the above "legal" definition, have also been highly regarded, and are collected even to this day. They are worthy of esteem, even if not strictly "original," because they show designs and compositions by great artists not existing in any other form, and are often executed with skill and sensitive insight by gifted interpreters. Again the question of esthetic merit or quality is pertinent.

In the present day there seems to be a tendency on the part of some artists to eliminate hand-work as much as possible and make use of modern photomechanical techniques of mass production for prints; and likewise to employ the assistance of others in the execution of the print. There is no reason why such prints should not be prized and collected by an admiring public. The active participation of the designer in the technical execution of the print—though eminently desirable—is not the only factor in the estimate of its worth. The public of the future may value the image exclusively and be indifferent to the means employed in projecting it. It is to be hoped that some new name will be invented to apply to such prints, since they do not conform to the traditional definition of "original print."

The Print Council became involved in the problem of originality in prints in order to protect the public from the sharp practices that have grown up, and not at all to direct printmakers to make original prints or any other kind of prints. The points at issue are treated in greater detail in the succeeding pages of this booklet.

Processes and techniques in modern printmaking

There are four major techniques for making original prints. A brief description of each of these—relief processes, incised processes, lithography, and stencil processes—is found in the following paragraphs.

Relief Processes

The basic principle of relief processes is that of cutting away part of the surface of a flat block so that the desired pattern or image stands up to provide a printing surface. Woodcuts and wood engravings are well-known. Other materials used are linoleum, lucite, cardboard, chipboard, composition board, plaster, and cut paper. In the case of cardboard or paper cuts, the areas are built up to provide the printing surfaces.

Incised Processes

The principle of incised or intaglio printing is exactly the opposite of relief printing. In the intaglio processes, the printing areas are grooves, furrows or indentations lower than the surface of a metal plate. In other words, the lines or surfaces which are etched out or cut away from the plate carry the ink. The high standing areas are wiped clean and do not print.

In intaglio processes, metal plates, chiefly copper, are used. Some artists have used lucite, zinc or aluminum sheets. The general division within the intaglio process are: Engraving, etching, aquatint, soft ground mezzotint and drypoint. The term "intaglio" is often used to designate those prints in which more than one method is used. Sometimes artists refer to the combining of methods and techniques as a "mixed method."

Lithography

Lithography is based on the natural antipathy of oil and water. The image is made on the stone (or a specially granulated zinc plate) with greasy crayon or ink.

The texture of the stone is such that, if moistened, the water adheres to it in an even film except where the grease has been applied. When a roller charged with heavy ink is applied to the moistened surface, the ink adheres only to the greasy areas. After printing, the greasy image remains on the stone and the process of moistening, inking, and printing may be repeated.

Stencil Processes

In general the stencil process has been known to artists for centuries. Its basic principle is that of applying color or inks to the perforated or cutout sections of specially treated paper or thin material so that the desired pattern or design comes through the stencil to the surface to be printed. Thus all sections except those of the open design are masked out. Its most recent development is known as silk-screen printing. In the specialized field of fine printmaking this technique is called serigraphy. Variations of this technique are sometimes combined with engraving or etching to produce color prints.

Reproductions

In recent years there have appeared reproductions made by photo-mechanical and other processes, primarily published in France, which may seem to the uninformed to be original prints. They may be good reproductions but they are not original prints and they do not convey the aesthetic qualities of the original. To a degree they betray the original and coarsen its effect.

The difference in the price commanded by an original print and a reproduction acknowledged as such is largely a reflection of the difference in their aesthetic qualities. No one would wish to pay for an original print only to discover that he has acquired a reproduction which is worth far less.

In several instances, the French reproductions referred to above, and others, have been signed and numbered in pencil by the artist and have been offered for sale for \$250 or more. In other cases a so-called "original" print, for example, a color lithograph, has been made by a craftsman who copied and adapted a watercolor, drawing or oil painting by a well-known artist. Usually the craftsman's name does not appear and the artist has signed and numbered the limited edition of the print. Obviously the print is not an original print by the artist. Another more elementary instance of a trap for the unwary is the photographic reproduction of an original print such as a Toulouse-Lautrec poster.

Many prints appear which are technically original but which are offered for sale at prices far in excess of their value because they appear to be part of a limited edition which was, in fact, not limited.

Lithographs by Miro and Chagall were published in the French magazine **Verve** in an edition of thousands, and there were also printed from the same stone "limited" editions of one hundred, numbered and signed. These numbered prints sell for much more than they would if everyone knew that the edition was really unlimited.

In an extreme case, a London gallery has cut color lithographs by Chagall out of **Verve** and has stamped on them the signature of Chagall and a false indication that the edition was limited to two hundred.

One of the theoretical advantages of a limited edition, aside from its rarity, is that the prints are likely to be of finer quality because they were printed before the plate or wood block became worn. If a prior edition was printed, obviously a misrepresentation has been made with respect to quality.

Another practice of which one should be aware is that of adding an artist's signature long after publication. Prints originally unsigned, either because they did not meet the approval of the artist or because they appeared in a book, magazine, or other unlimited edition, often turn up with the added signature of the artist, either genuine or false.

Some of these practices are fraudulent. If a false representation is knowingly made to you with the intention that it be relied on and if, under all the circumstances, it is reasonable to rely on it and you do rely on it, to your damage, you have been defrauded. If you can prove your case (often an expensive and difficult job, particularly when the false statements are not in writing) you can rescind (get your money back) or sue for damages.

Reproductions are dutiable while original prints are dutyfree. If a custom declaration states that a print is a reproduction, the importer and anyone charged with his knowledge would be committing a fraud if he sold it as an original print. The text of pertinent provisions of the Tariff Act and Regulations is reproduced on page 30.

A buyer might reasonably request a dealer to state on the invoice that the print purchased is an original print. Refusal on the part of the dealer to do so would at least warn the buyer that the dealer was not prepared to guarantee its authenticity.

The best protection is education. Exposure to prints not only increases one's connoisseurship and enjoyment of prints but is a pleasurable occupation in itself. Often, however, even the experienced collector cannot rely entirely on his own judgment. Very few have the inclination, time, or ability to become experts. Those who are not can best protect their interests by consulting reliable dealers

or obtaining the guidance of museum curators. Buy prints only from those whom you know to be honorable and well informed. You should be able to obtain a written representation from the dealer describing the print in detail. The extent to which a dealer follows the recommendations of the Print Council (outlined in the next section), is a good index of his reliability.

The Dealer

1. A dealer should not describe any print as an original print, original etching, original lithograph, original engraving, original woodcut or the like, unless it is an original print as defined at page 7 above.
2. A dealer should deliver to a buyer a written invoice for prints sold, distinguishing reproductions from original prints in all printed matter, including catalogs, advertisements, and upon all invoices.
3. Catalog descriptions of prints should include all pertinent and significant information available with respect to such matters as collaboration on plate, signature or numbering by others than the artist, processes used and who used them, condition of print (such as cut margin or restoration), states, size of edition and number of impression, signature, date of execution, date of impression, cancellation of plate. Such information shall be conveyed to the buyer and shall, upon request, be entered on the invoice.
4. Dealers should use their best efforts to obtain from artists, publishers, and other sources, and to make available to the public, evidence that work is original; a description of how each print was made; and other pertinent facts such as catalog information and number.
5. Dealers should help members of the public to understand the difference between a reproduction and an original print, explaining processes of printmaking and using their best efforts to foster knowledge and appreciation of fine prints, new and old, avoiding unusual and misleading terms such as "heliograph" which conceal the fact that a reproduction is not an original print.

The Artist

It would be highly desirable for artists to adopt uniform practices with respect to numbering and signing prints. It is not clear at present what the artist's signature on a print stands for, and in some cases editions are deceptively numbered and described.

The artist should have the maximum participation possible in the making of the plate, block, stone or the like, and in printing from it. When he does all such work himself, that fact may be indicated either by the use of the term "imp." following his signature or by some other appropriate indication. When the artist does not do all the work himself, an appropriate indication disclosing the facts should appear on each print; e.g., where Mr. Jones, an artist, does not do his own printing but has it done by Mr. Smith, one proper type of indication would be "Jones del."—"Smith imp."

However, in transfer lithography, where the artist made a drawing on transfer paper with lithographic ink or crayon, for the purpose of having the image thereafter transferred to a stone without photographic processes, the artist may be considered as having made the image which is on the stone.

An artist should not sign a reproduction of his work unless it is clearly indicated that the work is a reproduction and not an original print.

Trial proofs pulled while work is in progress, representing various unfinished states, are not part of the edition. All impressions from the completed plate are part of the same edition. The maximum size of the edition should appear on each impression. The artist is free to print less but not more than the number indicated. Artist's proofs are included in the total number of the edition—the number of such proofs being entirely in the discretion of the artist.

There is no reason, from an aesthetic standpoint, why the number of prints in an edition should be limited, except that the quality of impressions may deteriorate in

certain media if too many are printed. However, if it is claimed that an edition is limited, it must be limited in fact.

An edition should be referred to as "limited" only when each print shows the total size of the edition. No hard and fast rule can be made at present as to the serial numbers upon each print in an edition. In certain media—for example, drypoint and aquatint—the first prints pulled are often superior to later ones. However, for color prints two or more plates are used, and after the first printing the prints are usually hung up to dry. It is unlikely that the second printing will be done in the same order as the first; thus, the individual number on the print is often misleading. Artists should use their best efforts to number individual prints correctly and to formulate standards for such numbering. Until such standards are universally accepted, the serial number on many prints will have little significance.

If, after an edition has been pulled, the artist decides to reuse the plate, he may do so with different colors, provided the new edition is marked "2nd Ed." and, if he reworks the plate substantially, further prints should be marked second state, thus: "2nd st."

When all prints to be pulled from a plate have been printed or if the artist decides not to print the entire edition, he should destroy the image (as, for example, in the case of a lithographic stone) or cancel the plate or other material, so that any further impressions will not be confused with the limited edition. Cancellation may be effected by altering the original shape of the plate in such a way as to alter the design; for example, on a rectangular plate a corner containing a part of the image may be distinctively altered from a right angle to a curve.

The historical background

Carl Zigrosser

The concept of originality in prints and the value placed upon it have undergone many changes during the centuries since prints were first made. One must distinguish between several kinds of originality, a confusion partially due to the nature of the graphic processes. One meaning relates to the artist and his work. The original artist is the creator, prime mover, inventor as contrasted with the copyist or follower: Rembrandt as against Ferdinand Bol, or the **Apostle St. John** engraved by the Master ES as against the copy of the same subject by Van Meckenem. Two other uses of the word original are peculiar to print-making. In prints, there are not one but many **originals** (used as a noun), since the graphic media were specially devised for the purpose of creating multi-originals. Each fine print is therefore an **original**, whereas of a painting or drawing there is only the one original. When used as an adjective, as in **original** etching, there is the implication that the print was designed and executed by one and the same person. Thus, in the original etching, Whistler's **Nocturne**, of the first Venice Set, the artist drew the design on the copper, etched it with acid, and printed the proof himself, in contrast with a reproductive print, such as **The Massacre of the Innocents**, which was engraved by Marc Antonio Raimondi but copied after the drawing by Raphael. There has been a tendency, recently, to limit original prints strictly to those in which the artist has performed every step of the process, including the printing, as in Whistler's **Nocturne**. Where the plate was executed in a relatively simple technique and no color was involved and where a large edition was called for, as in Whistler's **Black Lion Wharf**, the plate was turned over for printing to a professional printer (the Ellis and Greene printer, or Goulding). But recently with the use of complex intaglio techniques including color, as employed by Lasansky or Peterdi for example, the artist maintains that only he is capable of carrying out the ultimate intention in printing.

Today we are much more conscious of originality in all senses of the word than our forefathers were. In the late Middle Ages when prints began to be made in Europe, the idea of originality did not exist; there were traditional themes and traditional modes of depicting them which were transmitted from artist to artist and generation to generation. Artists copied and recopied each other's work without any sense of guilt. In the mediaeval, and to a large extent in the oriental conception of art, the artist's personality was submerged in his work. Pictures were not signed. The earliest signatures on prints were marks or monograms such as E.S. or MS (Master ES or Martin Schongauer); and it has been suggested that these marks—following the practice of goldsmiths—were hallmarks or guarantees of honest and masterly workmanship rather than signatures in the modern sense of the word. Gradually, however, as prints and easel paintings became transportable, and therefore acquired use and value as personal property, the artist's name became a valuable asset; and his production, issued under his own trademark, became almost a special brand of merchandise. Beginning at the time of the Renaissance, anonymity was replaced by the emphasis and exploitation of the artist's individual personality. The concept of plagiarism and forgery came about very gradually as a controversial issue. When Dürer went to Venice in 1505 to protest Raimondi's wholesale plagiarism of his **Life of the Virgin** series and other prints, the only satisfaction he could obtain from the authorities was that Raimondi was enjoined from using Dürer's monogram. In the XVII century artists occasionally received protection against fraudulent copying as a special favor from ruling monarchs. On certain prints published by Rubens, for example, are engraved the words **cum privilegiis regis . . .** (with the privileges or protection of the king). The first general copyright law was passed by the British Parliament in 1735 upon petition of Hogarth and others who had suffered from plagiarism and piracy. Thereafter, Hogarth's engravings—the series **Rake's Progress** for example—bear the line **Published according to Act of Parliament**. Since then, the artist's rights in his own design are fairly well established in most countries, in principle at least.

Again, today, we are more conscious of execution, the artist's personal touch, than were earlier print amateurs. They were more apt to value the print not for its own

sake but as a surrogate of a drawing or painting. They were more concerned with a generalized outline of the composition as suggestive of sublime and noble design. They accepted the reproductive limitation of the print and did not demand the personal touch of the designer's hand. It must be remembered that the chief function of printmaking throughout its early history was reproductive. The "original" print, as we value it today, by Rembrandt, Goya, Degas, Mantegna, for example, was the exception rather than the rule. A striking example of this attitude may be seen in Van Dyck's **Iconography**. Of the hundred odd designs which Van Dyck made for his gallery of famous men, only five of the eighteen which he actually etched, remained intact. The other thirteen were "finished," and all the rest completely engraved by professional craftsmen after his drawings. He had intended to do the whole set himself, but had abandoned the idea because his own presentation was unpopular. Today we are extravagant in our appraisal of his original etchings, in comparison with the rest of the **Iconography**.

It was in the XIX century that the concept of the original print began to emerge in tangible form. The invention of photography early in the century was a critical point in the history of printmaking, but its full impact was not realized until the end of the century, when its applications to photomechanical reproduction were perfected. The effect was revolutionary and far reaching. As was said in **Six Centuries of Fine Prints**, New York, 1937: "Through the development of photoengraving, the line cut and the halftone, it (photography) stripped regular printmaking completely of its reproductive function. . . . The artist who now makes prints speaks not as a copyist but as a creative artist working directly in a graphic medium. This has necessitated a new orientation, a new justification for prints. They must stand or fall as an independent art."

There were also active spokesmen on behalf of the original print from about the middle of the XIX century onward. Whistler preached the gospel by precept and example. Seymour Haden wrote a pamphlet in 1883, **The Relative Claims of Etching and Engraving to Rank as Fine Arts**, in which he coined the phrase **painter-etchers** and **painter-engravers** as opposed to reproductive craftsmen. For the purpose of his argument he classified

all the creative virtues under the heading of etching and all the dull mechanical practices under the head of engraving: "The essential differences between etching and engraving may, therefore, be described as of two kinds—differences of principle, and differences of technique—and these again be expressed, not inaptly, by some such formula as the following: 'Etching, depending on brain impulse, is personal; and the creative faculty being chiefly engaged in it, invention, sensibility, and the various attributes which make up the sum of genius, belong to it and constitute it an **art**. Engraving being without personality—except such as may be supposed to be involved in the act of copying or translating the work of another—originality, and all the attributes which attend the exercise of the creative faculty, are absent from it, and constitute it a **métier**.'" The question of originals versus photomechanical reproductions also came up later in the XIX century. Sir Hubert Herkomer was sharply criticised in the British press by Walter Sickert and Joseph Pennell for selling photogravures of his paintings as original etchings. The influence of Whistler and Haden bore fruit in England and America in the high regard placed upon original etching at the beginning of the XX century. In spite of the fact that this appreciation was limited to etching (and, as it has turned out, often to etchings by artists of mediocre potential) it was a step toward the recognition of printmaking as a major medium. In France, although many of their great artists have made original prints in one form or another, there is still a large body of opinion which has no high regard for printmaking as a creative medium, and considers it a reproductive process for the luxury trade. Even after the photomechanical reproductive processes were fully perfected, "de luxe," publications were issued containing reproductions of paintings etched by mediocre artists or professional printers, designed to have a luxury or snob appeal (including such eye catchers as Japan vellum paper, marginal "remarques," limited editions, and fancy bindings), although in reality these "handmade" productions were inferior—as far as fidelity to the original paintings were concerned—to regular process prints. This fact and the presence of highly skilled craftsmen in printing and color work have brought about some of the questionable practices in vogue today in France. If there are fools, chiefly from America, eager in their ignorance, to pay high prices for reproductions in the belief that they are original prints, who is to disillusion them?

Printmakers in America, more than in any other country today, feel an obligation to perform every step in the production of a print from the preparation of the plates, blocks, or stones to the printing of the finished impressions. This may be due in part to a dearth of skilled professional printers, who might relieve the artist of part of the burden, and in part to a sense of dedication on the part of the artist to what he considers a major creative medium, and which impels him to participate in every step of it. There is among certain printmakers, as among certain abstract-expressionist painters, an uncompromising, almost religious fervor which exalts their self expression as a law unto itself. It is possible that too great a value can be placed on originality and absolute participation. One wonders if these printmakers in their eagerness to establish graphic art as a major creative medium of equal rank with painting and the plastic arts, are negating the very idea of the print as a moderately priced multi-original. Certainly the large size, the complexity of color, and the extremely limited editions of many recent prints are designed to compete directly with paintings. These speculations, however, are beside the point: the artist will go on to fulfill his destiny no matter what the critics say. What is pertinent is the high value placed upon original prints in America by the artists and especially by the public, relatively prosperous and eager to own original works of art. When a public, thus conditioned, is offered signed prints by famous artists which it assumes to be original prints but actually are reproductions by a skilled craftsman, then the question of fraud raises its ugly head.

The practice of signing prints in pencil is of fairly recent origin. The earliest prints were not signed at all. Later a signature or monogram was placed directly on the plate, block, or stone, either in the composition or in the margin directly below. Most reproductive prints, logically, have notations in the margin indicating the painter and engraver; for instance on the **Village Dance** is engraved on the left **Rubens pinx.** (Rubens painted it) and on the right **Bolswert sculp.** (Bolswert engraved it). Whistler and Haden were among the first to sign their prints in pencil. Whistler's later prints were signed with his Butterfly mark and the word **imp.**, indicating that he also printed the plate. Whistler's and Haden's earlier prints were issued unsigned. The theoretical justification for the artist's signature in pencil is the implication that he

inspected the impression and approved of it. It is amusing to note that Haden would sign any early unsigned print brought to him for the fee of a guinea. The later British and American Schools, Cameron, Bone, Arms, and the like, were quite meticulous in the printing and signing of their proofs. Today practically all prints are signed in pencil by the artist, and the signature is assumed to be a guaranty of authenticity and originality. Reproduction of paintings or prints have also been issued, presumably in limited editions and signed in pencil by the artist. The theoretical justification again is that the artist has seen and approved of the print. It is of course a legitimate enterprise. Jacques Villon made a number of color prints after paintings by Matisse, Picasso, and the like. The prints were issued in limited quantities, and each print was signed both by the painter and by the engraver. If, however, the craftsman-reproducer does not sign the print but the designer does, or if the work is reproduced photomechanically without any mention thereof, then there is nothing to indicate whether the signed print is an original or a reproduction. In this ambiguous light the practice of signing reproductions in pencil is highly questionable.

In the past there was a division of labor in the production of prints. The earliest woodcuts were the product of two sets of hands, the designer and the woodcutter or **Formschneider**. In the XVI century the names of the designers generally became known, whereas the woodcutters usually remained anonymous but often highly skilled craftsmen. We do, however, know the names of several, such as Lützelberger, who cut Holbein's **Dance of Death**, and Boldrini who cut blocks for Titian. Dürer did not cut his own woodblocks although he engraved his own copper engravings. We do not think the less of Dürer's woodcuts or those of Cranach, because they were cut by other hands. Among Chinese and Japanese prints likewise there was a division of labor between the designer, the woodcutter, and the printer; and the finest Japanese prints are held in high esteem. Here and today, the artists cut and print their own blocks; and even in Japan there is a new kind of original print "**Sosaku Hanga**," following the example of the West in uniting the functions of the designer, cutter, and printer. It has happened occasionally that electrotypes have been made directly from a wood block and that prints were then taken from the metal plate instead of from the

wood, as for instance with some of the reproductive wood engravings of Timothy Cole. Although it would be extremely difficult to distinguish, on visual evidence alone, between prints from the two different sources, purists claim that only those from wood are entitled to rank as true prints.

In the early days engravings or etchings were probably printed in the artists' studios (Dürer's or Rembrandt's for example) by pupils and apprentices. Later, professional plate printers appeared: Bosse has a picture of such a studio. Some of the XIX century printers—Eugène Delâtre or Frederick Goulding—were renowned for the beauty and expertness of their printing. We do not value a fine Meryon etching the less for having been printed by Delâtre. The technical treatment was relatively uncomplicated and the effect was dependent on straightforward drawing and subtle biting. A sensitive printer, given a model to follow, could produce any number of beautiful impressions up to the limit of the life of the copper plate. When, however, the plate became worn with repeated printings and was reworked and reinforced by foreign hands, the quality of the impressions deteriorated, as the sad specimens of late Rembrandts, Van Dycks, Piranesis, Goyas, and other **Chalcographie** prints can plainly bear witness. Nonetheless this negative judgment refers chiefly to the quality of the impression: such prints are still original prints, although pale reflections of fine early examples. Fraud enters into the situation only where some one, trading on the name and fame of the artist, misrepresents the quality of late impressions for commercial gain. The cultivated amateur or collector is much more conscious of printing quality today than in the past. If this were not true, then the various **chalcographies** of Rome, Paris, and Madrid would never have come into being.

The professional printer has been more consistently employed in lithography than in the other graphic media. Even today relatively few artists print their own lithographs. This may be due partly to the fact that a lithographic press is cumbersome and would occupy a large space in an artist's studio, but chiefly to the fact that quality in printing is dependent upon manual manipulation and intangibles of long experience. One cannot learn much about lithographic printing from a technical manual. Therefore, throughout the history of lithography, prints have been considered originals and in fact great

masterpieces, even though they were not printed by the artist—Goya's **Bullfights**, for example, or the lithographs of Toulouse-Lautrec. In making a lithograph it is possible for an artist to draw not only on stone or a metal plate but also on a piece of paper from which the design can be transferred to the stone by a skilled printer. The practice of transfer printing dates back to Senefelder's example, but some purists claim that prints made by this method are not originals but reproductions. The issue was settled once and for all in a celebrated libel suit, instituted by Pennell and Whistler against Walter Sickert in 1897 in reply to an article in the **Saturday Review**. Sickert had argued that to pass off drawings on paper as lithographs was misleading "to the purchaser on the vital point of commercial value." After a parade of distinguished witnesses and the citation of historical evidence, a verdict was found against Sickert, and transfer lithographs were established as legitimate original prints. Usually the artist, after the transfer has been made, continues to work on the stone. One use of the transfer does lead to questionable practices, namely when the finished drawing on a stone is transferred to another stone solely for the purpose of making a large edition. Some of Whistler's lithographs appeared in publications—**The Studio**, **The Albermarle**, **The Art Journal**, for example. Whistler's original drawing on stone was transferred to other stones for the production of the necessarily large editions. Whatever quality the hand proofs might have had vanished in the mechanical printing; and such prints on mediocre paper might be called reproductions though they often pass for originals.

The technique known as offset lithographic printing poses a special problem. The design is not printed from the stone or plate directly, but from a rubber blanket which has picked up the inked image from the lithograph plate attached to a cylinder—a double printing, as it were. It is a process which eliminates rolling up by hand in the interests of speed and quantity printing. It therefore is a border line case more slanted toward reproductive than toward original production. But occasionally an artist (Charlot, for example) has drawn lithographs with this process definitely in mind, and has thereby created charming and effective original prints. The offset principle (not necessarily lithographic) has also been used, in combination with other media (by Hayter and others) to add touches of color to color prints.

The silk screen stencil medium has been adapted for artists' use within the last twenty-five years. A number of artists who make original prints in the medium have decided to call them **serigraphs** to distinguish them from commercial silk screen reproductions. The process has also been used in conjunction with other mediums for the production of original color prints.

There are cases where a print was only partially executed by the artist, with assistance from other sources. May such works be classified as original prints? Corot, being primarily a painter and not a professional etcher, had trouble with the biting of his plates. In the etching **Souvenir d'Italie** his friend Bracquemond performed that service for him, no doubt with the collaboration of the artist, who, of course, drew the design on the copper. Such an etching is usually considered an original print. When Rouault was working on his series **Miserere**, photogravure plates were made of the preliminary drawings. These plates were then re-worked with burin, drypoint, aquatint, and the like, by the artist himself. Since the photomechanical work was transformed or incorporated in the artist's own handling, the finished product may properly be regarded as an original print. Cézanne, who likewise was primarily a painter and not a professional printmaker, drew a composition **Bathers** on a stone. From a trial proof colored by Cézanne in water color, the printer made color separations and prepared stones for further printing to produce the color lithograph. This print, greatly esteemed by collectors, may be rated as more than half original, since the supplementary work was done under the artist's supervision, and was based on a model made expressly for the purpose. On the other hand, to cite an extreme case, a famous artist brings to a lithograph printer a completely finished gouache, made with no particular thought of its use as a lithograph and with a treatment appropriate to the gouache medium. He leaves it with the printer as the **maquette** for the production of a color lithograph. He does not perform any of the steps of the production himself, and furthermore the model he furnishes is not executed in a style adapted to the lithograph medium for which it is destined. The finished lithograph, duly signed by the artist, can be regarded only as a reproductive print. The technician, who translated the composition to stone, also deserves some recognition for his share in the final product.

In conclusion, one may summarize the problem of reproductive versus original prints somewhat as follows. Due to the impact of photography and photo mechanical processes, a new attitude toward printmaking has developed which stresses the original, the creative factor. In general, one may say that hand work is bound up with art and original execution as opposed to automation and mechanical processes. When Emile Zola wrote his pamphlet in defense of Manet's much-criticized painting **Olympia**, and it seemed desirable to include an illustration, Manet himself made an etching of it. It was not a reproduction of the painting, though it served as one. It was actually a translation of the subject into another medium, a variant of the artist's conception. We are grateful for the occasion which induced Manet to make an original etching, designed and executed by himself. Today such a pamphlet would probably be illustrated with a process color reproduction.

In the past the name of the artist or designer and the name of the reproducing craftsman appeared on reproductive engravings as a matter of course. Sometimes even the title of the picture and the name and address of the publisher (**exec.** or **excutit**) were also engraved on the plate. Today this tradition has been broken and it is not common practice to indicate the name of the reproducing craftsman on the print, with the result that such prints often pass for originals because everywhere the accent is on the original print.

In our era, then, the graphic artists—particularly Hayter and the Americans—tend to view printmaking as a major medium; and this point of view, which has also spread among critics, museum people, and the buying public, has tended to glorify originality and creation. It may be that too high a premium is being placed upon these values in the light of graphic tradition. There is an originality of design (which can still appear, although diluted, in reproductions) and there is an originality of execution (upon which the modern artists set great store). In past print history, the invention *per se*, the design and the message, were what the public looked for and prized. To be sure, the original artist of old also was concerned with the execution and with the effort to clothe his conception in the most perfect form possible. But that concern was his private affair, related to his artistic conscience, and of interest, possibly, only to his fellow

practitioners, but certainly not to the layman in general. The modern artists (and through them now the public at large) tend to be conscious not only of what they say but also of how they say it. Indeed they almost make the latter the prime creative motivation. Thus, when they make a print, they maintain that it is a complete aesthetic entity, a perfect fusion of concept and form, a work of art which could not exist in any other shape or form, and which is fully the equal in validity and impact of an oil painting, irrespective of whether it exists in one or more impressions. But in any estimate of rank between major and minor art, one must remember that printmaking really cannot count on the still potent asset of uniqueness, as can painting, drawing, and to a lesser extent, plastic art (which also has its problem with casts as multi-originals). The transvaluation of printmaking from minor into major, however, is in the spirit of the age, and must be reckoned with. It is imperative above all that we come to terms with certain attitudes—holdovers from the past—which, being less scrupulous in discrimination between original and reproductive, are causing confusion and misunderstanding.

These notes are designed to review objectively the conflicting standards of business morality held by some artists and some dealers. It may turn out that the problem is one of semantics rather than ethics. We must make the issue widespread and make clear just what the difference is between original and reproductive. These notes also aim to place this very modern problem into some sort of historical perspective in order to serve as a corrective, possibly, of any uninformed criticism from the modern point of view of various practices in the past. Those practices might be deemed questionable today, whereas they were quite legitimate in the framework of their time.

Draft of resolution, pages 28, 29.

Tariff act and regulations, pages 30, 31.

**Some books on fine prints and printmaking,
pages 32 to 35.**

Draft of resolution

adopted by the Third International Congress of Plastic Arts, Vienna, September 1960.

ESTAMPES ORIGINALES

1. Il appartient à l'artiste graveur, et seulement à celui-ci, de fixer le nombre définitif de chacune de ses oeuvres graphiques dans les différentes techniques: gravure, lithographie, etc.

2. Chaque planche, pour être considérée originale, doit porter non seulement la signature de l'artiste, mais également l'indication du nombre total des tirages et le numéro de série de la planche.

L'artiste peut également mentionner qu'il a lui-même procédé au tirage.^a

3. Il est souhaitable qu'une fois les estampes tirées, la planche d'origine soit rayée ou qu'elle porte tout autre signe distinctif indiquant que le tirage est terminé.

4. Les principes sus-indiqués s'appliquent aux oeuvres graphiques qui peuvent être considérées comme originales c'est, à-dire à des oeuvres imprimées dont les planches ont été exécutées par l'artiste. Les oeuvres qui ne répondraient pas à ces conditions devraient être considérées comme des "reproductions."

5. En ce qui concerne les reproductions, aucune règle n'est possible. Toutefois, il est souhaitable que les reproductions soient déclarées comme telles et, par conséquent, distinguées sans aucune équivoque possible des oeuvres graphiques originales. Ce principe s'applique particulièrement aux productions d'une qualité telle que l'artiste, désirant reconnaître le travail matériellement exécuté par l'imprimeur, s'estime pleinement justifié à les signer.

Note (a): Aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique, l'artiste qui a lui-même procédé au tirage de ses planches fait suivre sa signature des lettres "Imp." (impressit).

ORIGINAL PRINTS

1. It is the exclusive right of the artist-printmaker to fix the definitive number of each of his graphic works in the different techniques: engraving, lithography, etc.

2. Each print, in order to be considered an original, must bear not only the signature of the artist, but also an indication of the total edition and the serial number of the print.

The artist may also indicate that he himself is the printer.^a

3. Once the edition has been made, it is desirable that the original plate, stone, woodblock, or whatever material was used in pulling the print edition, should be defaced or should bear a distinctive mark indicating that the edition has been completed.

4. The above principles apply to graphic works which can be considered originals, that is to say to prints for which the artist made the original plate, cut the woodblock, worked on the stone or on any other material. Works which do not fulfill these conditions must be considered "reproductions."

5. For reproductions no regulations are possible. However, it is desirable that reproductions should be acknowledged as such, and so distinguished beyond question from original graphic work. This is particularly so when reproductions are of such outstanding quality that the artist, wishing to acknowledge the work materially executed by the printer, feels justified in signing them.

Note (a): In the United States of America, when the artist himself is the printer he places the letters "Imp." (impressit, he printed it) after his signature.

Tariff act and regulations

After providing that unbound etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs and prints made by other hand transfer processes may enter free of duty, Par. 1807 of the Tariff Act defines these prints as including "only such as are printed by hand from plates, stones, or blocks etched, drawn, or engraved with hand tools and not such as are printed from plates, stones, or blocks etched, drawn, or engraved by photochemical or other mechanical processes."

The pertinent regulation (Par. 10.48) provides in part as follows:

10.48 Original paintings, engravings, drawings, sculpture, etc.

(a) Invoices covering works of art claimed to be free of duty under paragraph 1807, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended, shall show whether they are originals, replicas, reproductions, or copies, and also the name of the artist who produced them, unless upon examination the appraiser is satisfied that such statement is not necessary to a proper determination of the facts.

(b) The following evidence shall be filed in connection with the entry:

(1) A declaration in the following form by the artist who produced the article, showing whether it is original; . . . and in the case of etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, or prints made by other hand transfer processes, that they were printed by hand from hand-etched, hand-drawn, or hand-engraved plates, stones, or blocks:

I,, do hereby declare that I am the painter or producer of certain works of art, viz.: covered by the annexed invoice dated; and that the said etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, or prints made by other hand-transfer processes were printed by hand from hand-etched, hand-drawn, or hand-engraved plates, stones, or blocks.

(2) A declaration of the seller or shipper giving the information specified in (1), if it be shown that it is impossible to produce the declaration of the artist.

(3) A declaration of the importer on customs Form 3307.

(c) The declaration of the artist, or the declaration of the seller or shipper in lieu thereof, may be waived upon a satisfactory showing that it is impossible to produce either, but the declaration of the importer shall be required in all cases.

(d) Artists' proof etchings, engravings, woodcuts, lithographs, or prints made by other hand transfer processes should bear the genuine signature or mark of the artist as evidence of their authenticity; in the absence of such a signature or mark, other evidence shall be required which will establish the authenticity of the work to the satisfaction of the collector.

Some Books on Fine Prints and Printmaking

Compiled for the Print Council by Robert M. Walker
Chairman, Department of Fine Arts, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.

JEAN ADHEMAR

GRAPHIC ART OF THE 18th CENTURY
New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964
Indispensable as an introduction. Bibliography.

KENNETH W. AUVIL

SERIGRAPHY
New York, Prentice-Hall, 1965
Techniques of silkscreen printing.

DAVID BLAND

A HISTORY OF BOOK ILLUSTRATION
New York, World, 1958
Introduction to the illuminated manuscript and the printed book.

ANDRE BLUM

THE ORIGINS OF PRINTING AND ENGRAVING
New York, Scribner, 1940
Discussion of the origins in XVth century Europe.

ELFIED BOCK

GESCHICHTE DER GRAPHISCHEN KUNST VON IHREN
ANFAENGEN BIS ZUR GEGENWART
Berlin, Propylaen, 1930
Basic history of fine prints with over 500 illustrations made from originals.

FELIX BRUNNER

HANDBOOK OF GRAPHIC REPRODUCTION PROCESSES
New York, Hastings, 1962
Survey of techniques.

LOTHAR G. BUCHEIM

THE GRAPHIC ART OF GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM
New York, Universe Books, 1960
A new basic text.

HENRY CLIFFE

LITHOGRAPHY
New York, Watson, 1965
Introduction to technique with suppliers directory index.

HAROLD CURWEN

PROCESSES OF GRAPHIC REPRODUCTION IN PRINTING
New York, Dover, 1958
Revised edition by Charles Mayo.
Consideration of both fine arts and mechanical processes.

ADOLPH DEHN and LAWRENCE BARRETT

HOW TO DRAW AND PRINT LITHOGRAPHS
New York, American Artists Group, 1950
Introduction to graphic techniques.

FRANK and DOROTHY GETLEIN

THE BITE OF THE PRINT
New York, Potter, 1963
"Satire and irony in woodcuts, engravings, etchings,
lithographs, and serigraphs."

ANNE LYON HAIGHT, Ed.

PORTRAIT OF LATIN AMERICA AS SEEN BY HER PRINTMAKERS
New York, Hastings, 1946
Survey of XXth century Latin American prints.

STANLEY W. HAYTER

ABOUT PRINTS
New York, Oxford U.P., 1966
Comments by a leading contemporary printmaker. Bibliography. New edition.

STANLEY W. HAYTER

NEW WAYS OF GRAVURE
New York, Oxford U.P., 1966
"A practical guide to line engraving, etching, dry point,
aquatint, and bitten textures."

JULES HELLER

MODERN LITHOGRAPHY
New York, Holt, 1950
Basic introduction.

JULES HELLER

PRINTMAKING TODAY
New York, Holt, 1958
Contemporary printmaking in the '50s.

ARTHUR M. HIND

GUIDE TO THE PROCESSES AND SCHOOLS OF ENGRAVING
London, British Museum, 1952
Concise introduction in pamphlet format.

ARTHUR M. HIND

AN INTRODUCTION TO A HISTORY OF WOODCUTS
New York, Dover, 1963
Two volume paperback first published in 1935.
Comprehensive and basic study.

ARTHUR M. HIND

A HISTORY OF ENGRAVING AND ETCHING
New York, Dover, 1963
Paperback edition based on the third edition of 1923. Standard work.

OWEN E. HOLLOWAY

GRAPHIC ART OF JAPAN: THE CLASSICAL SCHOOL
London, Tiranti, 1957
Authoritative.

WILLIAM M. IVINS, JR.

PRINTS AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION
Cambridge, Mass., Harvard U.P., 1953
A speculative study of communication through pictures since the Renaissance.

WILLIAM M. IVINS, JR.

HOW PRINTS LOOK
Boston, Beacon, 1962. Paper
Comments on magnified details of prints by old masters.

WILLIAM M. IVINS, JR.

NOTES ON PRINTS
Da Capo Press, New York, 1967
Reprint of 1930 ed.
Illus. history of origins and development.

RICHARD LANE

MASTERS OF THE JAPANESE PRINT
New York, Doubleday, 1962
Basic survey of printmaking in Japan from the XVIIth to the XXth century.

JEAN LARAN

L'ESTAMPE
Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959
Two volumes (text and over 400 plates).
General survey; bibliography; biographies.

STEPHEN LONGSTREET

TREASURY OF THE WORLD'S GREAT PRINTS
New York, Simon & Schuster, 1961
Illustrations.

ERNEST L. LUMSDEN

THE ART OF ETCHING
New York, Dover, 1962
Paperback edition of 1929 edition. Informative on history and technique.

JAMES MICHENER

JAPANESE PRINTS FROM THE EARLY MASTERS TO THE MODERN
Rutland, Vt., Tuttle, 1963
Introduction by Michener. Notes on prints by Richard Lane. General survey.

HANS ALEXANDER MUELLER

WOODCUTS AND WOOD ENGRAVINGS: HOW I MAKE THEM
New York, Pynson, 1939
Individual and informative.

THEODOR MUSPER

DER HOLZSCHNITT IN FUNF JAHRHUNDERTEN
Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1964
General text.

GABOR PETERDI

PRINTMAKING: METHODS OLD AND NEW
New York, Macmillan, 1959
By the founder of the Graphic Workshop, Brooklyn Museum Art School.

RONALD G. ROBERTSON

CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING IN JAPAN
New York, Crown, 1965
"With the techniques and prints of six leading Japanese woodblock artists."

CLAUDE ROGER-MARX

GRAPHIC ART OF THE 19th CENTURY
New York, McGraw-Hill, 1963
Translated by E. M. Gwyer. Concise survey, Bibliography.

MICHAEL ROTHENSTEIN

LINOCUTS AND WOODCUTS
New York, Watson, 1964
"A complete block printing handbook." Sources of print making supplies compiled with the guidance of Pratt Center for Contemporary Printmaking.

PAUL J. SACHS

MODERN PRINTS AND DRAWINGS
New York, Knopf, 1954
"A guide to a better understanding of modern draughtsmanship."

HARRY SHOKLER

ARTISTS MANUAL FOR SILK SCREEN PRINT MAKING
New York, Tudor, n.d.
Useful manual.

HARRY STERNBERG

SILK SCREEN COLOR PRINTING
New York, McGraw-Hill, 1942
The first book on this technical process.

OLIVER STATLER

MODERN JAPANESE PRINT: AN ART REBORN
Rutland, Vt., Tuttle, 1956
Basic for this subject.

WOLF STUBBE

GRAPHIC ART OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
New York, Praeger, 1963
Survey limited largely to European examples.

JULIAN TREVELYAN

ETCHING: MODERN METHODS OF INTAGLIO PRINTING
New York, Watson, 1964
Informative on processes with directory of sources of equipment compiled with the guidance of Pratt Center for Contemporary Printmaking.

HERMAN J. WECHSLER

GREAT PRINTS AND PRINTMAKERS
New York, Abrams, 1967
Survey through selected examples.

EMIL WEDDIGE

LITHOGRAPHY
Scranton, Pa., International Textbook, 1966
Basic introduction.

FRANK WEITENKAMPF

AMERICAN GRAPHIC ART
New York, Macmillan, 1915
An older but informative text.

FRANK WEITENKAMPF

HOW TO APPRECIATE PRINTS
New York, Moffat and Yard, 1908
Not outdated.

CARL ZIGROSSER

THE BOOK OF FINE PRINTS
New York, Crown, 1956
Introduction to graphic art of both the East and the West with bibliography.

CARL ZIGROSSER

THE EXPRESSIONISTS: A SURVEY OF THEIR GRAPHIC ART
New York, Braziller, 1957
Illustrations in color.

CARL ZIGROSSER and CHRISTA M. GAEHDE

A GUIDE TO THE COLLECTING AND CARE OF ORIGINAL PRINTS
New York, Crown, 1966
Important for both the beginner and the experienced collector.

Miscellaneous

ART AND AUCTIONS

Rotterdam, 1957
International art dealers' and collectors' guide.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, Boston, Mass.

THE ARTIST AND THE BOOK, 1860-1960, IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1961
Introduction by Philip Hofer. Catalogue by Eleanor M. Garvey.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Brooklyn, N.Y.

TEN YEARS OF AMERICAN PRINTS: 1947-1956
Brooklyn, N.Y., Brooklyn Museum, 1956
Text by Una E. Johnson.

JOSHUA BINION CAHN

WHAT IS AN ORIGINAL PRINT?
New York, Print Council of America, 1967
Revised edition.

PHILIP HOFER

"THE ILLUSTRATION OF BOOKS," A HISTORY OF THE PRINTED BOOK: DOLPHIN III, pp. 389-466
New York, The Limited Editions Club, 1938
Edited by Lawrence C. Wroth.

WERNER HOFMANN

CARICATURE FROM LEONARDO TO PICASSO
New York, Crown, 1957

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, New York, N.Y.

PRINTS. GUIDE TO PRINT COLLECTIONS
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1964
Text by A. Hyatt Mayor. Paper.

H. J. PLENDERLEITH

THE CONSERVATION OF ANTIQUITIES AND WORKS OF ART; TREATMENT, REPAIR, AND RESTORATION
London, British Museum, 1957
A classic.

PRATT CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING, New York

ARTIST'S PROOF
Annual magazine of printmaking.

PRINT COLLECTOR'S QUARTERLY, 1911-1950**ALBERT REESE**

AMERICAN PRIZE PRINTS OF THE 20th CENTURY
New York, American Artists Group Publications, n.d.

CARL ZIGROSSER, Ed.

PRINTS: THIRTEEN ESSAYS ON THE ART OF THE PRINT
New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1962
Published for The Print Council of America.

CARL ZIRGOSSEW
 THE BOOK OF FINE PRINTS
 New York, 1952
 Introduction by Giorgio de Chirico and the West

CARL ZIRGOSSEW
 THE EXPRESSIONISTS: A SURVEY OF THEIR WORKS
 New York, 1952
 Illustrations in color

CARL ZIRGOSSEW and CHRISTA M. GARDNER
 A GUIDE TO THE COLLECTING AND CARE OF ORIGINAL PRINTS
 New York, 1952
 Includes the data for the background and experimental factors

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
 THE YEARS OF AMERICAN PRINTS, 1825-1860
 New York, 1952
 Text by Carl Zirgossen

Miscellaneous

ART AND AUCTIONS
 Boston, 1952
 Introduction by Carl Zirgossen and collectors' guides

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, Boston, Mass.
 THE ARTIST AND THE BOOK, 1800-1900 IN WESTERN EUROPE
 AND THE UNITED STATES
 Boston, 1952
 Introduction by Carl Zirgossen

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Brooklyn, N.Y.
 THE YEARS OF AMERICAN PRINTS, 1825-1860
 Boston, N.Y., Brooklyn Museum, 1952
 Text by Carl Zirgossen

JOHN SINGER SARGENT
 WHAT IS AN ORIGINAL PRINT?
 New York, 1952
 Revised edition

PHILIP HOFFER
 THE ILLUSTRATION OF BOOKS: A HISTORY OF THE PRINTED BOOK
 Boston, 1952
 Edited by Lawrence G. Wright

WERNER HOFMANN
 CARICATURE FROM LEONARDO TO PICASSO
 New York, 1952

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, New York, N.Y.
 PRINTS, GUIDE TO PRINT COLLECTIONS
 New York, 1952
 Text by Carl Zirgossen

M. J. MENDELSTEIN
 THE PRESERVATION OF THE PRINTS AND WORKS OF ART
 TREATMENT, REPAIR, AND RESTORATION
 London, 1952
 A comprehensive treatment of the subject

PRATT CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING, New York, N.Y.
 ARTIST'S PRINT
 Annual magazine of printmaking
 PRINT COLLECTOR'S QUARTERLY, 1951-1952

ALBERT RASE
 AMERICAN PRINTS OF THE 20th CENTURY
 New York, American Artists Group Publications, N.Y.

CARL ZIRGOSSEW, Ed.
 PRINTS: THIRTEEN ESSAYS ON THE ART OF THE PRINT
 New York, 1952
 Published for the Print Council of America

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 325 GOLD STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y. 11201