

A Brighter Vision: European Colour Printing 1450–1830

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Glossary of Technical Terms¹

¹ This list of terms is based on the Glossary in *Stijnman & Savage 2015*, pp. 224–227.

À LA POUPÉE INKING: One matrix* is inked with more than one colour on different, adjacent areas and printed in one run through or pull of the press*; the impression* shows the different colours next to each other; see also RAINBOW PRINTING

ANASTATIC IMPRESSION: Brown images equal in size to the print's design on the mounting boards above (in reverse) and/or below the print, caused by a microclimate of water or peroxides between the oil-based ink of the print and boards; the brown images are degraded paper fibres

AQUATINT: generic term for a number of intaglio printmaking processes suited to etch tonalities in a printing plate

BATIK: Cloth is painted or stamped with a resist, commonly wax, and dyed, usually with indigo; melting off the wax in hot water leaves the design blank against the coloured background

BLIND EMBOSSING: Pressing an uninked matrix* against and into a sheet of paper; see also EMBOSSING

BLOCKBOOK: Bound volume of a series of woodcut* images, usually with text cut next to the images in the same blocks, but also with pages with images or text only

BRANDING: Pressing a red-hot metal stamp against living skin or wood to deform or char these supports* respectively

CHIAROSCURO PRINTING: Multiple hues of the same colour or adjacent colours are over-printed in register*, each from a different matrix*, to create a spatial effect with highlights and shades; see also COLOUR PRINTING, POLYCHROMATIC

COLOUR BLENDING, see RAINBOW PRINTING

COLOUR PRINTING, MONOCHROMATIC: Making a non-black impression*

COLOUR PRINTING, POLYCHROMATIC: making a multi-coloured impression*, also including black from multiple matrices*; the matrices can be independent* or interdependent*; see also CHIAROSCURO PRINTING

COLOURANT: Colourants in printing ink concern finely ground pigments, indigo and lakes

COMMON PRESS: Machine for relief printing*; see also PRESS

COMPOUND PLATE PRINTING, for intaglio printing also 'Jigsaw plate printing': The matrix* is divided into different pieces that are inked separately, each inked in its own colour, fit together on the bed of the press and printed together to make one impression*

COUNTERPROOF: A freshly pulled print is placed face-down on top of a blank sheet and pressed against it, offsetting the wet ink in reverse of the original

CRAYON ENGRAVING: Intaglio printmaking technique by which a design is created by locally roughening the plate with special tools, such as roulettes, or with hard powders in order to create crayon-like lines in bas-relief

CRAYON ETCHING: Intaglio printmaking technique by which the plate is covered with normal etching ground and the ground treated with special tools, such as multiple pointed etching needles, or hard powders; the plate is etched and shows crayon-like lines in bas-relief

DOMINOTIER: French printer of playing cards, popular prints, wallpaper and other ephemeral matter, other than a book or plate printer; *dominotiers* could be settled or itinerant

DRYPOINT: Intaglio printmaking technique by which a design is scratched into the plate by means of a sharp needle, creating burrs left on either side of the scratched line

EMBOSSING: Pressing a rolling* stamp or stamp* with a high or bas-relief into a soft material, such as clay, dough, leather, soap or wax; see also BLIND EMBOSSING

ENGRAVING: Intaglio printmaking technique by which a bas-relief design cut with various tools into a copper or brass plate

ETCHING: Intaglio printmaking technique by which a bas-relief design drawn through a resist on and bitten with an acid into a metal plate

FLOCK-PRINT: Print with wool-dust pasted to a printed colour in order to mimick velvet cloth; see also TINSEL-PRINT

FRISKET: The part of a common press* to which a mask or stencil* is attached; the frisket folds over the paper to be printed to prevent it from falling onto the printing forme*; the mask covers the margins

around the text columns in the printing forme* that should stay clean; in black/red printing per colour a different mask is used for covering the parts not to be printed; see PRINTING IN REGISTER

FRISKET PRINTING: A mechanised form of applying colour to a support* by means of or through a mask or stencil; in black/red printing, the openings in the mask for the red ink are largely covered, leaving only room for accents to be printed over the already existing design; these colour accents are always printed slightly out of register; see also STENCILLING

FRISKET SHEET: (Part of) the mask or stencil used in frisket printing; strips of friskets sheet often survived as bookbinding materials

HAND-COLOURING: Manually brushing paint onto an impression*; see also STENCILLING

HISTORIATED INITIAL: Initial containing a picture, usually depicting a history; see also INHABITED INITIAL

IMPRESSION, also 'Print': Offset of a matrix*, or combination of multiple matrices, prepared with a printing* ink onto a support*, i.e. the print; also the result of branding*

INDEPENDENT MATRIX: One of multiple matrices for one colour impression* that on its own produces an impression with a legible design; see also INTERDEPENDENT MATRIX and KEYBLOCK/KEYPLATE

INHABITED INITIAL: Initial containing a figure, usually in the form of a human being or animal; see also HISTORIATED INITIAL

INK, see PRINTING INK

INTAGLIO PRINTING: Making an impression* of a matrix* with a design in bas-relief

INTERDEPENT MATRIX: One of multiple matrices* for making one impression* that requires the other matrices to create a legible design in the impression*; see also INDEPENDENT MATRIX and KEYBLOCK/KEYPLATE

JIGSAW PRINTING, see COMPOUND PLATE PRINTING

KEYBLOCK/KEYPLATE: The matrix* that provides the outlines of the design in a group of independent* matrices; see also TONE BLOCK/TONE PLATE

LETTERPRESS: Text produced in relief* printing from inked movable type

LITHOGRAPHIC PRESS: Machine for lithography*; see also PRESS

LITHOGRAPHY: Making an impression* of a matrix* with a design that is level with its background; see also PAPYROGRAPHY, PLANOGRAPHIC PRINTING, ZINCOGRAPHY

MACULATURE (PRINT): In general, a discarded misprint; more particular, an impression of an intaglio plate that is cleaned with olive oil or rape oil, rubbed with a cloth and run through the press to pull the mixture of oil and ink from the grooves

MATRIX/MATRICES: Block, plate, printing* forme or stone with a design and/or text in high or bas-relief, or planographic to make an impression* of

METALCUT: Brass plate with an engraved design in high-relief for relief printing*

MEZZOTINT: Intaglio printmaking technique by which the surface of a copper plate is roughened with a tool with a serrated edge, such as a rocker or a roulette, creating pits surrounded by burrs; tones can be built up by roughening more or less locally, or the complete surface of the plate can be rocked and the burr scraped and polished away until the required tonality in the impressions is reached

NATURE PRINTING: Making an impression* of an existing object, such as of a hand or leaf, onto a support*

OFFSETTING, also Rubbing, Smearing: The ink of an earlier printed sheet comes off on the back of the next sheet placed on top of it, which happens when the ink layer is not yet dry enough or is too thick and has not dried internally, or when the pile of sheets above it is too heavy

OIL VARNISH: Binding medium for oil-based printing ink*, being heat-bodied linseed oil, boiled with or without resins, driers or further additives; alternatively also walnut oil or poppy-seed oil can be used; oil varnish from hemp-seed or rape-seed oil was used for printing ink for cheap publications

OIL-BASED INK: Ink made of a colourant that is mixed and ground with a heat-bodied (boiled and/or burnt) vegetable oil – with or without admixture of resins, driers or further conditioners – a so-called oil varnish*; see also WATER-BASED INK

PALETTE: Any combination of printed colours used in an impression*; see also STATE, VARIANT and VERSION

PAPYROGRAPHY: Lithography* from a sheet of heavy paper covered with a stone-like layer

PASTEPRINT: A sheet of paper is covered with a thin, resin-rich paste and a matrix* is pressed into the paste while still soft; the impression* shows the white of the paper; the paste can have a colour or hand-colouring* can be applied; a metal foil can be stuck to the paper and the paste placed on the foil, which shows the reflection of the foil in the impression*

PICKING, also Peeling, Plucking: Fibers or bits of paper separating from the body of the support* and sticking to the ink on the matrix when lifting the sheet after printing; this may be caused by use of too viscous oil varnish(es), low temperatures due to which oil varnish becomes more viscous and tacky, by incomplete mixing in of the ink's more viscous oil varnish constituent, or when intaglio ink is mixed with a drier and wiping a plate takes so long that the ink already starts drying on the plate

PLANOGRAPHIC PRINTING: Lithography*; after 1850 also collotype (*Lichtdruck*) and offset printing

POCHOIR PRINTING: Creating images by stencil printing* only, developed from the late nineteenth century

POWDERING, also Rubbing off: After drying, some colourant releases from the ink layer when handled, which happens when the binding medium was too thin, or was thinned with a solvent, and has sunken into the support* too much

PRESS: Machine for making an impression* from a matrix* onto a support*; see also COMMON PRESS, LITHOGRAPHIC PRESS and ROLLING PRESS

PRINT, see IMPRESSION

PRINTING FORME: A body of moveable type, initials, decorations, music annotations and/or stereotype* blocks or woodcuts* that are locked within a frame; to be printed in a common* press

PRINTING IN REGISTER: Super-imposing impressions of different matrices in any printmaking process, such as chiaroscuro printing*, or a combination of printmaking processes to create one coherent design; see also FRISKET PRINTING

PRINTING INK: The substance by which a design is offset from a matrix* onto a support* to make an impression*; oil-based printing inks are mixtures of colourants with oil varnish* as binding medium; water-based inks are mixtures of colourants with a paste of water-soluble binding media such as gum or starch dissolved in water, or iron gall inks with extra gum arabic added

RAINBOW PRINTING, also 'Colour blending': Inking a lithographic stone or relief block with a roller charged with two or more colours; the impression shows bands of colour, one merging into the other at their sides, like the colours of a rainbow; see also *À LA POUPEE* INKING

RELIEF PRINTING: Making an impression* of an inked matrix* with a design in high-relief onto a support*

RHEOPECTY: Over-pigmented inks become stiffer upon being stirred or ground; see also THIXOTROPY

ROLLING PRESS: Machine for intaglio printing*; see also PRESS

ROLLING STAMP: (1) Cylindrical stamp for embossing* a bas-relief design into clay; (2) cylindrical stamp with a high-relief design that is inked and rolled over a support* for relief printing*

ROTOGRAVURE: A photomechanically made intaglio plate is bent around a cylinder of a fully mechanised press; after 1900 plates were replaced by etched cylinders

RUBBING: A matrix* is placed face-up on a table, its surface inked, a sheet of paper placed on top of it and the reverse of the sheet rubbed to make an impression* manually, i.e. without a press*

STAMP: A wooden, earthenware, stone, ivory or metal block with the design cut out in bas-relief or high-relief on one side and (usually) a handle on the other side; used for embossing* or stamping*; see also ROLLING STAMP

STAMPING: A stamp* is inked and pressed face-down into a soft material for embossing*; a bronze or iron stamp is heated and pressed against a support* for branding*; a stamp's surface is inked and pressed against a support* for relief printing*

STATE: A form of a print defined by deliberate (not accidental) alterations to a single matrix*; an impression* of each such change or group of changes defines a new situation or appearance of that matrix; for prints created with multiple matrices*, each matrix may be in a different state; see also PALETTE, VARIANT and VERSION

STENCIL: A mask that covers part of a support* that is inked or painted through its openings; otherwise, the area of the support* around a mask is inked or painted

STENCIL PRINTING: Creating a text, decoration or imagery by means of stencils only; predecessor of *pochoir* printing* and screen-printing; for a mechanised form of stencil printing see FRISKET PRINTING

STENCILLING: Masking an area of a drawing or an impression* to be brushed with a colour paint

STEREOTYPE: The relief of an initial, a word, one or more lines to a complete page of movable type is pressed into clay, *papier maché*, plaster or sand and a cast made of it to create a matrix* to be printed in relief*

STRIKING THROUGH, also Bleeding: When pigment and oil varnish* are not intensely mixed and ground, or when too much thin oil varnish is present in the ink, the oil varnish will leach out of the printing ink* after printing, resulting in vertical and lateral staining of the sheet

SUPPORT: Carrier of the impression*, usually a sheet of paper, but also cloth, leather, living skin or parchment; also rigid supports such as metal plates, wooden planks or stone walls

TACK: Adherence between ink and paper

THIXOTROPY: The mixture of pigment with an oil-based binding medium becomes more fluid upon pressure exerted, as happens in mixing, grinding and printing; see also RHEOPECTY

TINSEL-PRINT: A print decorated by pasting shimmering materials, such as snippets of leafmetal, metalpowder, crushed glass, fine quart crystals or mica to it; see also FLOCK-PRINT

TONE BLOCK/TONE PLATE: The matrix* that provides the colour or background areas of the design in a group of independent* matrices; see also KEY BLOCK/KEYPLATE

TONER: Blue colourant, such as indigo or Prussian blue added to black ink to deepen its hue and to counter future browning of the ink; for artistic purposes a brown or red pigment was added to black ink by artist-printmakers in the second half of the nineteenth century, which gave the black a 'warmer' hue

VARIANT: Deliberate alteration of one or more colours of the palette* of an impression*; see also PALETTE, STATE and VERSION

VERSION: Nearly precise copy of a matrix*, or of multiple matrices* that together make one impression*

WATER-BASED INK: Ink made of a colourant that is mixed with a binding medium or vehicle that contains water or is water-soluble; see also OIL-BASED INK

WHITE LINE PRINT: Impression* of a matrix* with a bas-relief design that is used for relief printing*; the impression* shows uninked lines within the inked background

WOOD ENGRAVING: A wooden block with a design engraved with burin and scorper into its surface for relief* printing

WOODCUT: A wooden block with a design cut with knife and gauge into its surface for relief* printing

ZINCOGRAPHY: Lithography* printed from zinc plates

ZWISCHGOLD: Metal-leaf made by hammering goldleaf and silverleaf together; because of the silver content it is cheaper than goldleaf and it gives a brighter shine