

Education guide

The exhibition

Limited Editions **Arthur Boyd** in print, the first major exhibition to focus on Arthur Boyd's prints, will travel to regional and metropolitan Australia in 2005 – 2006. This exhibition will take us on a journey through Arthur Boyd's printmaking career, beginning in the early 1960s when he embarked on his first series of etchings, through to the collagraphs and etchings of the 1990s. The exhibition comprises of 59 prints including etchings, aquatints, silkscreen prints, lithographs and collagraphs along with books, printing plates and correspondence with writers and publishers.

Arthur Boyd is celebrated for his paintings however he is also recognised as a significant printmaker – nationally and internationally. Limited Editions **Arthur Boyd** in print is a unique opportunity for audiences to encounter this great artist through his prints.



St Francis being beaten by his father, 1964-65
Lithograph,
480 x 605

Boyd's command of a wide range of printing techniques is illustrated in the exhibition: from his skilful use of the soft lithograph crayon in *St Francis* (1964-65) and *Pushkin's Fairy Tales* (1978); bold and evocative etchings and aquatints of *The Lady and the Unicorn* (1973-74) and *Narcissus Suite* (1983); to his experimentation with the rich colours and textures of collagraphs in the 1990s in the book *Sangkuriang (A legend from West Java)*, 1993.

In his exploration of different printmaking techniques Arthur Boyd was able to restate and reinterpret subject

matter and themes from earlier works in new ways. Boyd often illustrated human responses to the complexities of life through myths, legends and biblical stories. These themes and stories are ever present in the prints in the exhibition Limited Editions **Arthur Boyd** in print.

Education Guide

The Guide is intended for use by teachers of K – 12 visual arts and gallery staff. It provides information, questions and workshops, delivered in an educational format, to be used in the classroom and/or at the gallery when viewing this exhibition.

Additional support material

BUNDANON will make available to teachers on request a selection of primary source materials in the form of copies of letters; newspaper reviews and articles; catalogues and poetry.

This material, some of which is included in the exhibition, is a valuable primary source for further study within the year 7–12 syllabus. The material adds further depth to our understanding of Boyd's printmaking - particularly the collaborative process between the artist and writer/poet and how Boyd's prints were used in publications and theatre sets and costumes.

A CD of selected images from the exhibition is also available.

The Education Guide and the additional support material provide a rich resource to promote student understanding in the areas of:

artists' world

personal & social interest

artistic content

practice & technique

cultural convention

audience

Tour Itinerary

- 1 Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, VIC
15/03/05 - 08/05/05
- 2 Benalla Art Gallery, VIC
22/05/05 - 03/07/05
- 3 Nolan Gallery, ACT
16/09/05 - 06/11/05
- 4 Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW
16/11/05 - 08/01/06
- 5 Queensland University of Technology Art Museum
16/01/06 - 12/03/06
- 6 Newcastle Region Art Gallery, NSW
25/03/06 - 21/05/06
- 7 New England Regional Art Museum, NSW
07/07/06 - 27/08/06
- 8 Shoalhaven City Arts Centre, NSW
07/09/06 - 19/10/06

For further information on the Exhibition, Education Guide, additional support material or visiting BUNDANON contact Public Programs on: (02) 4423 5999

Figure in the landscape: Years Kindergarten-6

- *Narcissus Suite*, 1983

What feelings do these artworks evoke in you?

Do they tell a story? What is happening in the work?

What meaning is the artist trying to communicate to his audience?

Research the story of Narcissus and write about it in your own words.

Create a series of self portrait images using a variety of techniques – mirrored reflections, left handed portraits, continuous circular motion line drawings, profile and front-on ‘police style’ drawings. Using a mix of materials – inks, charcoal, pastels – create a larger artwork of your self portrait using the warm up drawings as inspiration.



Pushkin's Fairy Tales – A fisherman and a magic fish, 1978

Lithograph, 900 x 640

MYTH AND MAGIC:

- *The Lady and the Unicorn*, 1973-74
- *Pushkin's Fairy Tales*, 1978

Look at the ways in which the artist uses light and dark tones in his work.

What effects are created with the use of black and white? How different do the artworks look with white figures on a black background compared to black lines on a white background?

Choose a creature from within one of the

prints and write a story about it.

Draw and paint your creature using only black and white materials. Mix them together to create shades of grey for details of tone and shadow.

HISTORY REPEATS:

- *Mars series*, 1988
- *Nebuchadnezzar blind on a starry night*, 1992-93

What hints does the artist give in regard to his feelings about war?

Consider *Nebuchadnezzar blind on a starry night*. Describe the two characters in this artwork. What messages do you get from the use of colour in this print?

Investigate what was happening in the world during the 1960s which may have affected the subject matter chosen by artists of the time.

Choose a significant moment in history and working as a group, translate the story into a script for a short play. Using re-cycled materials, create props and costumes for your performance.

PERSONAL SYMBOLISM:

- *Potter fallen beside sculptured head*, 1968-69
- *An artist in Tuscany*, 1994-95

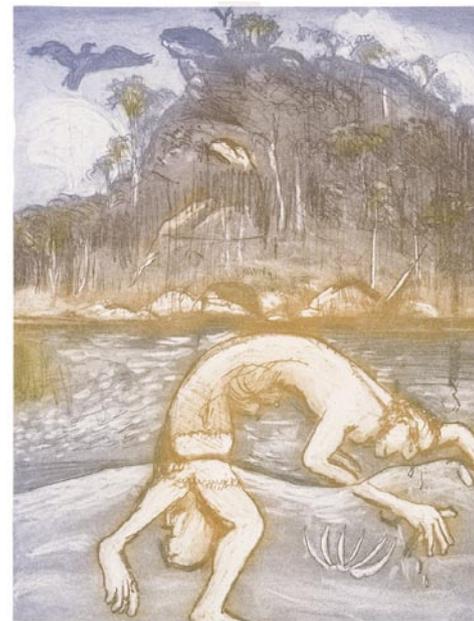
Potter fallen beside sculptured head is a personal work recording an episode from the life of the artist's father.

What is happening in this work? How do you feel when viewing this work? What is it in the artwork that makes you feel this way?

Find other examples of artists who have painted their family members and compare with Arthur Boyd's print. Have the artists changed or distorted elements in their artworks?

Is Arthur Boyd concerned with creating a realistic portrayal of his father? Why do you think he has chosen to share his own personal experiences in this way?

Photocopy a favourite photo of yourself and blow-up to A4 size. Tear into at least eight pieces and collage onto a large sheet of paper. Using mixed media develop a fantasy or realistic landscape setting around your portrait so that you are part of a mosaic. You will need to think more 'abstractly' in creating your composition. Include text and mapping to extend the concept of a 'personal mosaic landscape'.



Bundanon Suite–Narcissus and sea eagle, 1993
Etching and aquatint, 225 x 300

PLACES AND SPACES:

- *Bundanon Suite*, 1993
- *Sangkuriang (A Legend from West Java)*, 1993

Imagine you are sitting in the landscape of *Narcissus and sea eagle*. Describe what you would hear, see, smell and feel. Write a list of words which best describe these sounds, sensations and textures.

Look at the different ways in which Arthur Boyd has represented a river in his series of prints. Imagine you are a bird flying over the landscape, a fish swimming in the river and a person in a small boat. Draw the river from each of these positions using a variety of materials – ink, charcoal, watercolour pencils, graphite, pastel.

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Figure in the landscape: Years 7-12

- *Narcissus Suite*, 1983
- *Bundanon Suite*, 1993

“The classical figure of Narcissus does not remain a stranger in the Shoalhaven landscape, but entering Boyd’s family of forms, becomes a strand in the web of his art...”

Ursula Hoff, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986

What is meant by the term “family of forms”?

What codes, symbols or signs can you identify in the *Narcissus Suite*?

Is there an emotion that the artist is trying to convey?

Consider the work *Transformation Scene II*. What other styles or artists does it reference? Does it remind you of any other art you have seen?

“Narcissus would live long if he did not come to know himself”.

Who or what do you think Narcissus is a symbol of for Arthur Boyd?

What meaning is the artist trying to communicate?

What kind of river environment is portrayed in these works? How does this contribute to the visual literacy of the series?

“It’s as if nature were holding her breath...”

Describe the style of Arthur Boyd’s *Narcissus Suite*.

Research the printmaking process – how has the artist used materials to create this work and express his beliefs surrounding the human experience?

How does the process assist in the planning and execution of the artist’s response to the landscape?

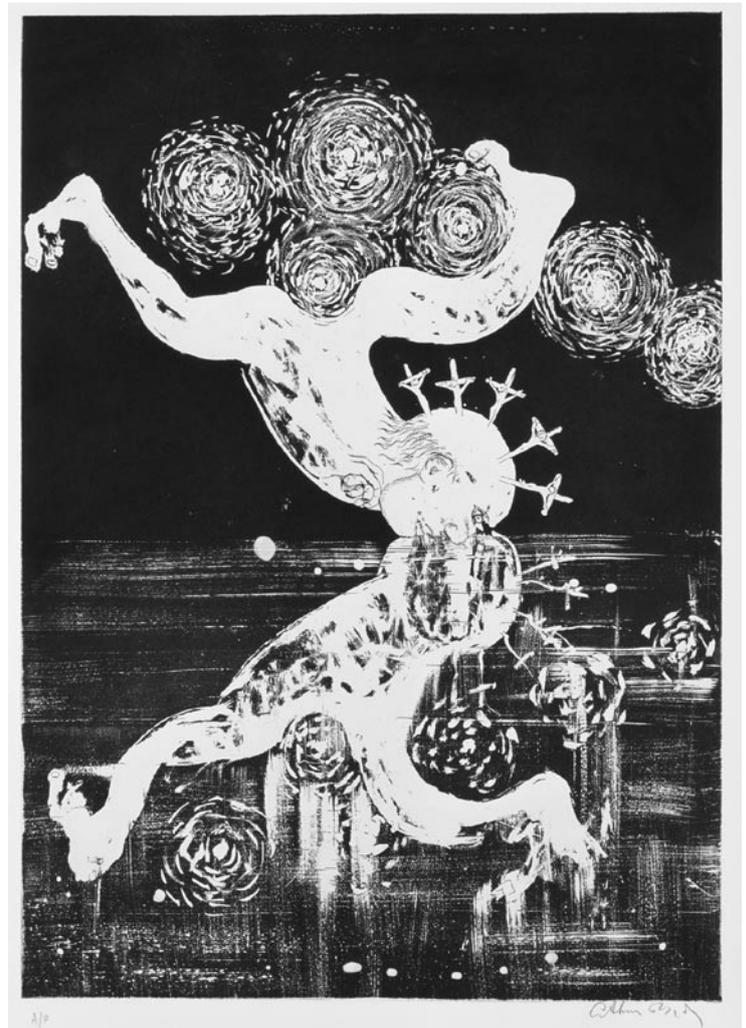
Research the myth of Narcissus, rewriting the narrative in your own words.

Workshop: Figure in the Landscape

Photography/drawing

Working within your school grounds, consider the emotional links you have with your school landscape and how you could translate these into storytelling using photography. Working in pairs or groups of three, create a setting with your figure in the environment. Give thought to the use of mythology and use composition, props, costume, camera angle, repetition and contrast to express your own narrative.

A character from ancient Greek and Roman legends, the Bible or childhood fairytales may inspire you. Take a series of photographs and further develop these into artworks using a variety of drawing materials.



Narcissus Suite - Transformation Scene II, 1983
Etching and aquatint, 795 x 590

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Myth and magic: Years 7-12

- *Elektra*, 1962-63
- *Lysistrata*, 1970
- *The Lady and the Unicorn*, 1973-74
- *Pushkin's Fairy Tales*, 1978

Compare the work of Arthur Boyd to Italian Masters such as Botticelli, Tintoretto and Titian. Can you find references or similarities to conventions and traditions within the elements in the artwork? Consider such things as composition, subject matter and use of symbols.



Daphne (from Elektra backdrop), 1962-63
Etching 349 x 403

“His technique of fine line and deep shadows recalls Goya and Rembrandt, but the imagery continues ... in ever new combinations to which the early motifs such as the gargoyle heads, the horned beast, and the double-ended figure lend a note of violence and fantasy”.

Ursula Hoff, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, London, Andre Deutsch, 1986

How has the artist ‘quoted’ from other sources in creating his artworks inspired by the mythological stories told to him as a child?

Choose one of the above myths from the exhibition and trace the history of its narrative. How has the meaning changed within each context?

(The story of *Elektra* was originally written in 500 BC by a Greek scholar, Sophocles. It has since been retold in many forms including Robert Helpmann’s ballet in London for which Arthur Boyd created large canvas backdrops and costumes. Consider the comic book Ninja warrior heroine which has spawned the recent Hollywood movie of *Elektra*).

Has Boyd created a new context which brings a new layer of meaning to an old story? Describe this in your own words.

“According to myth the unicorn is an emblem of purity; it is trapped and betrayed by the woman it loves and made over to the hunters. Porter and Boyd transport it into the fallen world, where it becomes the touchstone of vulgarity,

pride, possessiveness, lust and treachery”.
Ursula Hoff, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986

Consider the practise of putting white figures on a black background (*Lysistrata*, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, *Narcissus*) in contrast to the use of black line on a white background (*St Francis*, *Pushkin's Fairy Tales*, *Mars*).

Why do you think the artist has chosen to work the materials in this way?

Describe the different visual language evident in this contrast of darkness and light.

What contemporary ideas and experiences can you relate to the themes of violence, fantasy, pride and treachery?

Do you think these themes are relevant in the cultural and social setting of the twenty-first century?

Workshop: Myths and Monsters 3D Sculpture

When searching for inspiration for his art making practise, Arthur Boyd often found it in the myths and stories he had heard as a child. Drawing on inspiration from your own childhood stories and experience, recreate a fantasy creature in an expressionistic style using either clay or a selection of recycled materials. Draw and plan this creature first in your diaries; your work should express something of your own feelings and emotions. Give consideration to form, texture, colour and size.

Consider where this fantasy creature might live today and write a story with it relocated in a contemporary setting.



The Lady and the Unicorn – The Hunters Set Out to Trap the Unicorn, 1973-74
Etching and aquatint 595 x 430

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History repeats: Years 7-12

- *Mars series*, 1988
- *Nebuchadnezzar blind on a starry night*, 1992-93

Arthur Boyd often drew inspiration from the bible and ancient mythology, creating themes and imagery, which recurred throughout his career as an artist. The story of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, is one example which gave rise to a series of powerful and disturbing works commenting on the subject of war.

“One must remember that Boyd is dedicated to the use of allegory. The psychology of cruel, dictatorial rulers is not irrelevant in the twentieth century”

Ursula Hoff, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986

the similarities and differences between these and the works of Arthur Boyd? Consider the dominant elements and describe these in detail.

Can you identify any conventions or traditions underlying these artworks, which dictate the system of signs used to communicate with the viewer?

Working in collaboration with Australian poet Peter Porter, Arthur Boyd produced a number of ink drawings as illustrations for a book of poetry titled *Mars* (1988). These became the basis for a series of lithographs which explore universal themes of destruction, power and man’s inhumanity to man.

As visual literacy, art provides a way of knowing about the world. What kind of a world is described in the *Mars*



Mars – The Baby Minder, 1988
Lithograph 480 x 390

Workshop: Personal Symbols

Experimental mixed media/collagraphs

Collect three or four images or objects which represent or are symbolic of your own personal life story. These may be found or familiar objects, images from newspapers or photographs and need only have meaning to you as an individual.

On a large sheet of paper draw the objects and images one at a time giving consideration to the composition through experimentation. Arrange them in a disorganised, random manner, rotate the page after each image is drawn and employ expressive mark making using inks, charcoal and/or pastel. Work quickly and freely and surprise yourself with the outcome.

Using this drawing as a basis for the design, make a collagraph plate on heavy cardboard using gesso, string, PVA and textured card. Print an edition of your collagraph.



Nebuchadnezzar blind on a starry night, 1992-93
Collagraph, 505 x 618

Many of Boyd’s *Nebuchadnezzar* works were produced in the 1960s, when he lived in London. How does the theme represented in these works reflect the issues in the culture of that time?

Why do you think the artist returned to this theme in the 1990s when living in the Shoalhaven in Australia?

Consider the work of other artists such as Goya, Picasso and George Gittoes who have explored themes of war. What are

prints? Is the artist deliberately trying to make the viewer feel something? What imagery, theories or ideas has the artist appropriated in these works? Has Boyd changed the original meaning of any of these?

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Personal symbolism: Years 7-12

- *Potter fallen beside sculptured head*, 1968-69
- *An artist in Tuscany*, 1994-95

"The Potter paintings...were intimate and autobiographical. They are poetic evocations of the early life of Merric and Doris Boyd; the artist's parents".

Ursula Hoff, *The Art of Arthur Boyd*, London: Andre Deutsch, 1986

Potter fallen beside sculptured head is unashamedly personal, recording an episode from the life of the artist's father.

How does the initial viewing of this artwork make you feel? What are the qualities of the artwork that make you feel this way? What are the visual and formal qualities that make up a 'system of signs' in this work? What cultural conventions are present to enable the viewer to get information and meaning? Find other examples of



Potter fallen beside sculptured head, 1968-69
Etching and aquatint
600 x 690

portraits of an artist's parents, Whistler's mother for example and compare with Boyd's *Potter fallen beside sculptured head*. Have the artists been concerned with creating a realistic artwork? Have the artists changed or distorted parts of their work? How does the style reflect the time in which the works were created?

The prints in *An artist in Tuscany* are a personal memoir of these holidays with images of his family and the places he visited. *"The prints were drawn and etched in-situ in Tuscany, the plates were prepared in the morning and then taken to the site of the subject of the print, where the plate was drawn and etched on the spot ..."*

Max Miller, *An artist in Tuscany*, information sheet in boxed suite, 1994-95.

What does the term 'in situ' mean? Why would the artist chose to prepare his printmaking plates in this manner? Explain what effect would be achieved by this practise.

What do you think the artist was trying to communicate about the time in which it was created?

Compare *Potter fallen beside sculptured head* with *Yvonne at Paretaio*. What do you notice about the way in which the compositions have been organised?

Consider the ways in which the artist has used the elements of art making – line, shape, tone, colour, texture, size.

What does each of these artworks reflect about the artist's personal and social interests at the time?



Workshop: Who Am I? – Self Portrait
Mixed media/mono-printing/lino-printing

Begin with a series of warm-up drawings using mirrored reflections, left-handed portraits, unbroken single line portraits, continuous circular-motion line drawing, profile and front-on 'police style' drawings and your friend's version of you. Using mono-printing and/or lino-printing techniques create a series of small self-portrait images. Divide a large sheet of paper into grided squares and collage the small printed portraits onto some of the squares. Fill the others with pastel and ink wash drawings of personal symbols and motifs. Include mapping of your own space and add text to describe your own personal system of symbols. Give thought to the balance, harmony, rhythm and contrast of your design.

An artist in Tuscany – Yvonne At Paretaio, 1994-95
Etching 227 x 302

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Places and spaces: Years 7-12

- *Shoalhaven bathers*, 1987
- *Bundanon Suite*, 1993
- *Sangkuriang (A Legend from West Java)*, 1993

"I think it's a very good idea to be able to turn to a number of different techniques. A new medium offers the artist a variety of keys: it allows him to re-state and sum up without repeating himself."

Arthur Boyd, quoted in a catalogue for *The graphic work of Arthur Boyd*, Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, 1972, p.7.



Shoalhaven bathers, 1987
Etching 540 x 750

What are the “keys” that the artist is referring to?
Describe the visual effects (line, contrast, colour, tone, shade, movement, texture) produced by the use of different printmaking techniques (collagraph, etching, lithography, screen printing) throughout the exhibition.
What feelings are evoked in you when viewing the styles of visual language found in each technique?
What kind of landscape would you as an artist aim to create with each different printmaking technique?
What qualities do you most admire within these works?

"Dealing with the spoiling of the landscape around his beloved Shoalhaven River near Nowra... (Boyd) suspends the visual reading of these picturesque compositions in the realistic rendition of a ravaged landscape in Australia..."

Grazia Gunn, *Arthur Boyd Paintings 1973 – 1988*, Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1988

Consider *Shoalhaven bathers*. What do you think is the meaning of the figures present in this landscape?
Why has the artist chosen to represent them in this manner? What are they wearing on their heads? What kind of relationship do these figures have with the surrounding landscape?
What signs or codes can you identify which reveal the artist's concern with the destruction of the natural environment?
How does the artwork challenge the established order of social and cultural values of the time?
Which of the prints in the exhibition do you think is the most successful interpretation of the Australian landscape? How does it capture your imagination?

Workshop: Visual Effects

Mixed media, painting

Arthur Boyd often made several versions of the same landscape using different mediums. Choose a site and produce four separate drawings of the scene in your visual diaries using a different material for each – graphite pencil, charcoal, black ink and sticks, coloured pastels. Spend ten minutes only on each drawing, focusing on line, movement, texture, tone and shade. Wet your paper on at least one of the works. Consider which of the mediums you enjoyed using the most, and which best suits your purpose and intentions. Make notes describing the different moods and feelings created with each material. Choose a combination of your preferred mediums, including watercolour paint, to develop a larger, more detailed and complex artwork of your landscape/site.



Shoalhaven Quartet I, 1988
Silkscreen, 770 x 596

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A Glossary of printmaking terms

Aquatint

An intaglio process where powdered resin is melted onto a plate to create tonal or textural variations. The plate is immersed in acid which bites around the resin granules. Tonal variation is achieved by blocking out areas and varying the length of exposure of the plate to the acid.

Artist's proof

A print taken and kept separate from the edition for the artist's own use. Often used to check if a plate is ready for printing an edition.

Collagraph

A form of printing in which prints are pulled from a block on which the design has been made up with collage techniques. A great variety of objects may be placed or stuck on the block to create interesting textures. The plate is inked with a roller to pick up the top surface textures and printed as a relief print. It can also be used to create an intaglio print by rubbing ink into the surface and wiping away the highest areas.

Drypoint

An intaglio technique where the lines of an image are scratched with a metal tool, known as a drypoint needle, into the surface of a metal plate. The tool leaves a burr which catches ink and prints as a soft, furry line.

Engraving

An intaglio technique where a design or image is incised into a metal plate using an engraving tool which can be either manual or powered. Technically the term only covers methods where the plate is incised and not bitten by acid as in etching and aquatint.

Etching

An intaglio process where an image is bitten into the surface of a metal plate using acid. The plate is coated with an acid resistant ground and the design is then drawn by scratching into the ground to the metal beneath. When the plate is inked the ink is left in the etched lines. The artist can work on the plate with virtually the same fluency and freedom as on paper.

Intaglio

An intaglio print is one where incisions are made into the plate (usually copper, zinc or steel), the print is then taken from the lowest part of the surface or from below the surface. The plate is inked and then the surface is wiped clean so that the ink remains only in the incisions before it is printed under extreme pressure so that damp paper is forced into the grooved design to collect the ink. Aquatint, drypoint, engraving, etching and mezzotint are all intaglio techniques.

Lithography

A surface printing technique in which a print is taken from a stone (Bavarian limestone), metal plate (zinc or aluminium) or coated paper, all of which retain grease and reject water. The design is drawn with a greasy crayon onto the stone or plate, which is then dampened and rolled with ink. The ink is rejected by the water and adheres to the grease of the crayon design, from which a print is taken.

Mezzotint

An intaglio technique used to create tones rather than lines. The plate is textured using a metal 'rocker' that leaves masses of tiny indentations in the surface of the plate which, when inked, will print totally black. Light tones are worked into the plate by burnishing away areas of the roughened metal to decrease the amount of ink they will retain. These areas print in degrees of grey to white tones.

Offset printing

A method of printing that involves the transfer of an inked image from a plate to an intermediary such as a rubber roller or cylinder, then in turn on to the paper. A commercial printing process used today.

Photolithography

Art work is photographically transferred to the plate and printed in an offset lithographic press. A commercial printing process used today.

Relief printing

A relief print is one where the print is taken from the highest surface of the plate. The surface can be raised above the original surface, as in the case of a collagraph, or what remains of the original surface after cutting away areas around the design which are not meant to print, for example woodcuts or linocuts.

Silk-screen printing

A printing technique where ink is forced through a fine screen onto paper or fabric. The design is created by stencils on the screen which control the distribution of the ink. Also known as serigraphy.

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