

South East Open Studios 2010

Glossary

ART MEDIA & TECHNIQUES

To help with your selection of artists and makers to visit, to talk with and enjoy their work, this glossary provides an insight into some of the 'artspak' of materials and processes that are amongst what we have on offer this year.



Paint

Oil. Oil paint is a type of slow-drying paint that consists of particles of pigment suspended in a drying oil, commonly linseed oil. The viscosity of the paint may be modified by the addition of a solvent such as turpentine or white spirit, and varnish may be added to increase the glossiness of the dried film. Oil paints are usually opaque, but can be applied as a translucent glaze. Since the 16th century oil on canvas has been a standard medium.

Watercolour. Watercolours are translucent water-based paints. Based on a transparent wash or glaze system of pigmentation that utilizes the colour and texture of the ground (often paper) for highlights.

Gouache. Gouache is an opaque form of watercolour with greater light reflective qualities. It has an appreciable film thickness and creates an actual paint layer upon the surface different from the transparency of watercolour.

Acrylic. Acrylic paint is fast-drying paint containing pigment suspended in an acrylic polymer emulsion. Acrylic paints can be diluted with water, but become water-resistant when dry. Depending on how much the paint is diluted (with water) or modified with acrylic gels, media, or pastes, the finished acrylic painting can resemble a watercolour or an oil painting, or have its own unique characteristics not attainable with other media. The paint is popular because it dries quickly.

Canvas. Canvas is an extremely heavy-duty plain-woven fabric. Canvas has become the most common support medium for oil painting, replacing wooden panels. Canvas is typically stretched across a wooden frame called a stretcher, and needs to be primed before it is to be used; this is to prevent oil paint from coming into direct contact with the canvas fibres, which will eventually cause the canvas to decay. Early canvas was made of linen, sturdy brownish fabric of considerable strength

Drawing

Pencil. Pencils create marks via physical abrasion, leaving behind a trail of solid core material that adheres to a sheet of paper or other surface. Most pencil cores are made of graphite mixed with variable amounts of clay binder, giving degrees of hard or softness, leaving grey or black marks that can be easily erased.

Ink. Inks have been used for centuries and were solid pigments ground down and suspended in a liquid. Modern inks, either soluble or waterproof can be manipulated to create fine lines, text or washes. Thicker inks in paste form are used extensively for printing processes.

Charcoal. Stick charcoal is created by burning sticks of wood (usually willow) into soft, medium, and hard consistencies of varying thicknesses. Compressed charcoal, charcoal powder mixed with gum binder compressed into round or square sticks. The amount of binder determines the hardness of the stick. Powdered charcoal is often used to "tone" or cover large sections of a drawing surface.

Pastel. Pastels in the form of a stick, consisting of pure powdered pigment and a binder are normally sold in three grades: soft, medium and hard. The soft is universally used. The soft texture allows for them to be easily manipulated, producing drawings that are rich with variety: texture, thin or thick marks, smooth or rough or level or impasto.

Collage. A collage (From the French: coller, to glue) is a work of art, primarily in the visual arts, made from an assemblage of different forms, thus creating a new whole. A collage may include newspaper clippings, ribbons and bits of coloured or hand-made papers, portions of other artwork, photographs or found objects.

Sculpture

Carving. Carving is a reductive or subtractive technique in which the artist removes material through cutting or abrading a block of material to create a piece. Marble, the stone used since antiquity, is very hard and difficult to carve; softer stones are alabaster, limestone, granite, sandstone and soapstone. Wood is very pliable and is therefore easier to carve, but subject to greater humidity and temperature fluctuations.

Casting. Casting is a manufacturing process by which a liquid material is usually poured into a mould, which contains a hollow cavity of the desired shape, and then allowed to solidify. The solidified part is also known as a casting, which is ejected or broken out of the mold to complete the process.

Casting materials are usually metals; Bronze is the most popular metal for cast metal sculptures; a cast bronze sculpture is often called simply a "bronze" or various cold setting materials that cure after mixing two or more components together; examples are epoxy resin, concrete, plaster or clay slip.

Modelling. Modelling is the process in which a three-dimensional form is shaped from manipulating by hand and with tools a soft malleable material, often clay or wax. Clay can then be fired in a kiln to make it permanent and durable.

Construction The term refers to work that is assembled from pre-formed or shaped elements that are joined.

Maquette A maquette (French word for scale model) is a small-scale model or rough draft of an unfinished architectural work or a sculpture.

Printmaking

Etchings Etchings are made when a metal plate (usually copper, zinc or steel) is coated with an acid-resisting wax or ground. The artist can then draw into the ground, scratching off with a variety of tools the areas that are to print black. The plate is dipped into an acid bath. The acid "bites" into the metal, where it is exposed, leaving behind lines sunk into the plate. The remaining ground is then cleaned off the plate. The plate is inked all over, and then the ink wiped off the surface, leaving only the ink in the etched depressions. Finally the plate is run through a high-pressure printing press together with a sheet of paper (often moistened to soften it). The paper picks up the ink from the etched areas transferring the ink onto the paper, making a print.

Aquatint Aquatint is an etching technique that allows areas of varying tones to be created by means of a textured plate. The area to be etched is dusted with a powdered resin and then heated to melt onto the surface. The plate is then placed in the acid bath to etch away the areas not protected by the granulated resin.

Screen printing Screen printing is a stencil printing technique that uses a woven mesh (either silk or nylon) attached to a frame to support an ink-blocking stencil design. Various film-forming materials as well as hand-cut film and paper stencils and photo-sensitive emulsions can be used as resists. Colour is poured into the frame that is placed into contact with the surface to be printed on. A squeegee is scraped across the screen stencil, forcing or pumping ink past the threads of the woven mesh in the open areas that transfer ink as a sharp-edged image it is also known as silk screening or serigraphy.

Woodcut Woodcut is a relief printing artistic technique in printmaking in which an image is carved into the surface of a block of wood, with the printing parts remaining level with the surface while the non-printing parts are removed, typically with gouges. The areas to show 'white' are cut away with a knife or chisel, leaving the characters or image to show in 'black' at the original surface level.

Linocut. Linocut is a variant of woodcut (Relief printing) in which a sheet of linoleum (sometimes mounted on a wooden block) is used for the relief surface. A design is cut into the lino surface with a sharp knife; V and U shaped chisel or gouge to create fine lines, with the raised (uncarved) areas representing a reversal (mirror image) of the parts to show printed. The linoleum sheet is inked with a roller and then impressed onto paper or fabric. The actual printing can be done by hand or with a press. Printmakers rarely use more than three or four colours, requiring a separate block for each colour.

Monoprints. A monoprint has a single underlying image that is made unique through a process of hand altering either the surface or the colour and pressure of the ink used to create different prints. A series of monoprints may be similar but are not identical to produce a series or limited editions. There are many techniques of monoprinting where there is a reusable matrix such as etching and screen printing.

Monotypes. A monotype is a unique image, where no matrix of permanent marks exists. Instead a thin even film of ink is rolled down on a plate, the artist can manipulate it by drawing into it, or by rubbing it off. The print image is taken from the plate or paper can be placed on top and is then drawn on, transferring the ink onto the paper. The characteristic of this method is that no two prints are alike. The beauty of this medium is also in its spontaneity and its combination of printmaking, painting and drawing media.

Giclée Giclée prints are produced from a digital image by a computer driven printer that sprays minute droplets of ink onto paper. The development of stable, archival inks and dedicated papers is ensuring the quality and popularity of these prints.

Ceramics

Terracotta A refined clay, when unglazed, the material will not be waterproof. The unglazed colour after firing can vary widely, but most common clays contain enough iron to cause an orange, orangish red, or brownish orange colour,

Stoneware A vitreous or semi-vitreous ceramic ware of fine texture. As a high-fired ceramic, stoneware is notably more difficult to produce than the earthenware and terra cotta readily seen in prehistory.

Earthenware Earthenware is fired at lower temperatures. Earthenware is a

common ceramic material, which is used extensively for pottery tableware and decorative objects. Earthenware may sometimes be as thin as bone china and other porcelains, though it is not translucent and is more easily chipped. It is also less strong, less tough, and more porous than stoneware, but is less expensive and easier to work. Due to its higher porosity, earthenware must usually be glazed in order to be watertight.

Porcelain. Porcelain is a very hard, translucent white ceramic. Traditionally a white kaolin clay is mixed with a type of ground granite and fired at extremely high temperatures. The result is a resilient, translucent beautiful piece of pottery.

Raku. Raku ware, is a type of Japanese pottery. It is traditionally characterized by hand-moulding of the clay as opposed to turning it on a potter's wheel, resulting in each piece being "one-of-a-kind"; low firing temperatures (resulting in a fairly porous body); lead glazes; and the removal of pieces from the kiln while still glowing hot. In the traditional Japanese firing process, the fired Raku piece is removed from the hot kiln and put directly into water, allowed to cool in the open air or covered with sawdust. Raku techniques have been adopted and modified by contemporary potters worldwide to create desirable collections.

Glazes. Glaze is a layer or coating of a vitreous substance that has been fired to fuse to a ceramic object to colour, decorate, strengthen or waterproof it

Glass

Stained glass. The term stained glass can refer to coloured glass as a material or to works made from it. Coloured glass is crafted into panels, windows or objects when small pieces of glass are arranged to form patterns or pictures, held together (traditionally) by strips of welded lead and supported by a rigid frame.

Kiln formed glass Using gas-fired kilns, glass can be layered along with a variety of inclusions: metals, enamels and lustres that when heated the sandwich fuses together. Resulting in large scale panels, delicate beads for jewellery or if slumped over forms within the kiln; bowls or other vessels.

Sandblasted Sandblasting is an abrasive engraving technique of propelling abrasive sand usually by compressed air or pressurized water.

Textiles

Spinning Spinning is an ancient textile art in which plant, animal or synthetic fibres are twisted together to form yarn.

Weaving. Weaving is the textile art in which two distinct sets of yarns or threads, called the warp and the filling or weft (older woof), are interlaced with each other to form a fabric or cloth. The warp threads run lengthways of the piece of cloth, and the weft runs across from side to side. Cloth is woven on a loom.

Knitted. Knitting is a method by which thread or yarn may be turned into cloth. Knitting consists of consecutive loops, called stitches held on a needle. As each row progresses, a new loop is pulled through an existing loop. This process eventually results in a final product, often a garment. Knitting may be done by hand or by machine. By hand, numerous styles and methods of knitting exist.

Felting. Felt is a non-woven cloth that is produced by matting, condensing and pressing woollen fibres. While some types of felt are very soft, some are tough enough to form construction materials. Felt can be of any colour, and made into any shape or size.

Needlework. Needlework is a broad term for the handicrafts of decorative sewing and textile arts. Anything that uses a needle and fabric and yarn for construction can be called needlework. The definition may expand to include related textile crafts such as a crochet, embroidery and applied to quilting.

Rag work. Traditional rug hooking is a craft where rugs, hangings or throws are made by pulling loops of yarn or fabric (often strips of rags) through a stiff woven base such as linen, rug warp or historically old sacking. The loops are pulled through the backing material by using a latch hook.

Other Terms

Mixed media. Mixed media tends to refer to a work of visual art that combines various traditionally distinct visual art media, for example a work on canvas that combines paint, ink, and collage.

Digital photography. Digital photography is a form of photography that uses digital technology to make images of subjects. Until the advent of such technology, photography used photographic film to create images that could be made visible by photographic processing. By contrast, digital photographs can be displayed, printed, stored, manipulated, transmitted, and archived using digital and computer techniques, without chemical processing.

Digital art. Digital art is an umbrella term for a range of artistic works and practices that utilise digital technology. This can encompass: Work digitally reproduced, work to be viewed digitally or work produced digitally, using the computer as a tool in the process resulting in the work existing outside of the computer, perhaps in the form of a print.