Fine Prints:

A Glossary of Terms Related to Types of Proofs and Related Nomenclature

**artist's proof**, **A.P**. and **A/P**; **epreuve d'artiste** (fr.) **oprobedruck** (gr.): A group of prints pulled after the bon **à** tirer and reserved for the private use of the artist. By tradition, the number of these prints is a fraction of the total number of edition prints and are designated as separate from the regular edition with notations such as A.P., artist proof, or Roman numerals.

**bon à tirer**: The formal designation for the first perfect impression pulled from a completed plate. In a collaborative effort between an artist and a craft practitioner, it serves as the reference print to which all subsequent impressions are gauged for conformity. At the close of editioning the plate, this print becomes the property of the master printer.

**cancel**, also see score: Defacing a printing plate after it has served its purpose to prevent further printing, or at least to render additional prints readily identifiable.

**cancellation proof:** A printed impression from a plate that has been canceled.

**closed:** When the last impression in an edition has been pulled and printing is suspended, the edition is said to be closed.

**copy**: Generally, a casual reference to any impression from a plate, but really a term that designates a reproduction.

**counter proof** also **offset proof:** A print that is made by transferring the image from a freshly pulled impression to a second sheet of paper. This is accomplished by placing the two sheets of paper face to face and running them together through a press. Ink from the first is offset onto the second by this application of pressure. The counter proof is a mirror image of the original proof and is oriented identically to the image as it appears on the plate. Therefore, it is useful to the artist as a guide for further development of the plate (see trial proof) and sometimes it is produced as an image that is pleasing in its own right.

**declaration:** A statement, as signified by inclusion of an edition number or other indicator, of the fact or intention to limit an edition of prints. Attested to by the artist's signature on the print.

**edition:** A reasonably uniform group of printed images from a plate or plates. Editions may be "open", in which case there is no upward limit to the number of impressions pulled; or they may be "closed" or "limited", in which case the total number of uniform prints is predetermined and when that limit is reached, no more prints are produced. This is a frequently abused concept.

**edition number:** The number written on a contemporary print, usually in pencil, indicating the print's designated place in a limited edition. Commonly written as a fraction, the number also indicates the total number of prints in the edition. e.g., a print that is numbered 5/20 would be the fifth impression designated in a total edition of twenty prints.

**edition varie**; **E.V.**: This designation appears on prints from the same edition in which the artist has authorized changes be made that alter that prints appearance from the rest of the edition.

**ghost print:** An impression from a plate pulled after that plate has been freshly printed, but without re-inking.

**hors de commerce**; **H.C.**: A group of prints pulled from the final state of a plate but separate from the declared edition and reserved for the private use of the artist or publisher. (Similar to artist's proofs)

**impression:** Any print of an image pulled from a plate or plates, on a single sheet of paper. This term encompasses all types of proofs and all prints from an edition.

**lifetime impression:** Any impression pulled from an artist's printing plates during the artist's lifetime and therefore theoretically under the artist's aesthetic control.

**monotype: Unique Impression:** A uniquely printed, non-reproducible image.

**multiple:** A modern term used to designate any image (often three-dimensional in nature) which has been issued as a number of copies produced from a master pattern or matrix. The term has come into usage as a way of classifying many contemporary images that exist legitimately, but do not lend themselves readily to the traditional classification of "print".

**posthumous impression:** An impression from a plate or plates that has been pulled after the death of the artist and therefore beyond the artist's aesthetic control.

**presentation proof:** An impression from a plate or plates that are declared to be outside the regular edition, produced with the intention of presenting them as gifts. (Compare with artist's and H.C. proofs)

**print:** Any impression pulled from a plate, usually on paper. (also see "impression" and "proof')

**printer's proof:** An impression of a plate pulled after the bon **à** tirer, but outside the edition. Signed by the artist and presented to the craft practitioners involved as an acknowledgment of their collaboration. Or, if only a master printer is involved, the bon **à** tirer itself will serve this roll.

**progressive proof:** A series of proofs pulled to test the functional interaction of plates for a multiple-plate print. The proof shows each of the plates printed individually and in combination with the rest.

**proof:** A generic term referring to any impression pulled from a plate and almost synonymous with "impression", but in use, more typically a reference to printed impressions that are not part of a regular edition. (See Artist's Proof, State Proof, etc.).

**publisher’s proof**; **P.P.**: Impressions outside an edition declared at the time of printing that are for the publisher. The number of publisher’s proofs will rarely exceed the number of artist’s Proofs. They are often used by the publisher as gifts to promote the artist and the edition.

**re-mark:** A corruption of remarque (see below) used in the contemporary reproductive printing trade to refer to sketches in pencil or ink on the paper margins of a reproduction. Re-marking is done by the artist who made the original image which has been copied after printing is complete. As a marketing strategy, this is used to boost the apparent value of the reproduction.

**remarque proof:** An impression bearing test drawings in the plate margins that were made incidentally to the primary image (see Expanded Key). These sketches are usually removed from the plate prior to editioning.

**restrike**, also **reprint** and see **posthumous impression:** An impression from a plate pulled after the close of the regular edition without any physical modification to the printing plate.

**reproduction:** A printed image from plates not worked on by the artist and which reproduces an image not originally intended as a print. Typically produced by photomechanical means and rarely by an intaglio process.

**score:** Making gouges with any tool in the metal of a printing plate to cancel it.

**short:** If edition printing of a plate is permanently suspended before its edition limit is reached, the edition is short. e.g., Closed short, or short run.

**state:** Any stage in the development of an intaglio printing plate.

**state proof**, **epreuve d'etat** (fr.): A formal printing of a plate or aggregate of plates to demonstrate and record progress in the development of an image. Almost synonymous with trial proof except that a State Proof will receive special treatment such as signing, numbering, etc. e.g., State III.

**trial proof**, also **working proof**: An informal printing of a plate or aggregate of plates to determine the nature of the image and degree of progress in the development of that image. Artists and printers consider these to be reference material and treat them with great casualness. Such proofs are rarely declared or numbered, they are often drawn upon, and frequently destroyed by intent or abuse.

**unique impression:** A print from a plate or plates that has been produced only once, for any reason. Such a print could have been replicated in an edition but has not been. A state or trial proof may be a unique impression if only one has been pulled from the plate before additional work is done upon it, but typically, a unique impression is a singularly prepared version of a completed plate.

**working proof:** See **trial proof**.

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