

Jenny Gunning & Ironbridge Framing



Intaglio/Aquatint Printmaking

A drawing is rendered of a subject then using a metal plate, (Zinc, Copper or Steel) the plate is degreased then a wax ground is melted on to the surface, the plate is then cooled and the image is drawn into the wax ground using scribes. However, the image should be scribed in reverse on the plate as the printed image is the mirror of the etching so when printed it will have the correct perspective. The removal of the wax allows the acid access to the plate when placed in an acid bath resulting in an etched plate.

The plate is placed in the bath for a time, depending on how deep the artist wishes the lines or area to be etched away will determine the length of time in the bath. The acid bites (etches) into the exposed lines where the wax or resin was removed leaving an image which is incised into the surface. The wax ground is washed off and an Aquatint Powder is melted onto the plate (this creates depth of tone) each tone is painted out by hand using a varnish (usually 12 tones to a plate), between each painting the plate is placed in the acid for a short time then washed with water and the next tone is then painted out until the entire subject has a range of tones.

To take a print, ink is pushed into the incisions, and the non-etched surface of the plate is carefully wiped clean, in order to leave the contrast of ink to paper. The plate is put onto a press bed with dampened paper on top; it is run through the press under pressure, as the plate travels under the press it draws the ink out of the grooves and onto the paper. Intaglio prints are often characterized by the aquatint (mentioned earlier) and the embossed line around the image, which is made by the edges of the plate under pressure. It is one of the oldest incision techniques dating back to the fourteenth century when it was used to apply decorations on armor. Rembrandt in the middle of the 1600's helped to refine and make the intaglio etching technique revered in the art community. Today only a very few talented people worldwide make etchings using this method.

Jenny and Dave Gunning, daughter and father have taken the traditional approach of Intaglio/Aquatint Etching and applied it to architecture, mechanical, historical, and archaeological subjects. Their pieces are sought after throughout the world and have been shown in the most prestigious shows, galleries and housed in private and permanent collections in the UK, USA, Korea, and Australia, including the Queens and Parliaments permanent collection.

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