

## BASIC PRINTMAKING

Relief printmaking techniques work on the principle of creating a relief surface (as in bas-relief) by carving away all the other surfaces of a wood or linoleum panel and leaving the raised design. Ink is rolled onto the panel; a dampened sheet of paper is placed on the panel and rubbed or rolled to transfer the ink.

Letterpress is a variation that involves the arrangement of carved or cast letters (moveable type) to prepare a printed text – possibly combined with a graphic image, prepared as above. Letterpress generally involves the use of a printing press that rolls across the inked letters (held in a frame) and presses the paper against that relief surface.

Intaglio prints entail creating incisions into the printing plate (traditionally copper). This may be done by hand inscribing, or acid etching. Ink is rubbed onto the plate, then wiped off, leaving ink in the recesses to pass on to the paper under pressure. Engraving, etching and aquatint are examples.

Planographic techniques alter the stone, plastic or other plate surface so that ink is only selectively retained, as by the mutual repulsion of oil and water. Lithography and monotyping are two popular techniques.

Stencil techniques involve the preparation of paper masks and other blockouts allowing printing ink to

pass only select areas of a fabric screen to meet the print surface.

## READ

Turnbased Press founder Kathleen Hudspeth recommends William M. Ivins, Jr.'s Prints and Visual Communications (classic) and Rebecca Zorach's Paper Museums (contemporary) writing about prints.