

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPRAISAL OF FINE ART**  
**GENERAL ART AND AUCTION MARKET TERMS**  
**GLOSSARY**

abstraction - art which makes no direct, immediate discernible reference to recognizable objects. In abstract art, the formal arrangement of colors and forms is independent of, and more important than, the subject matter.

academic - pertaining to the arts taught in the academies and schools of art according to established rules. Since the height of conservatism in the late 19th century, the term has become synonymous with traditional thinking and opposition to fresh and innovative ideas in art.

acrylic - a widely used (in the mid to late 20th century) waterbased polymer paint. Because of its chemical composition, it combines the characteristics of traditional oil and watercolor paints and can be used for washes and heavy impasto. It is relatively odorless, quick drying and resistant to deterioration.

acid-free - neutral pH state usually in reference to paper, board, or paste. pH is expressed on a scale of 0 - 14 ranging from alkalinity to acidity. pH 7 is neutral.

aquatint - an intaglio printing process similar to engraving which uses acid to eat into a metal plate. Unlike etchings/engravings, it is a tone, rather than a line process. The porous ground of the plate allows the acid to form a network of extremely fine lines, creating transparent affects comparable to those of watercolor painting.

assemblage - mixed-media combinations of found objects (rather than traditional art objects of paint, canvas, carved stone and cast bronze). Primarily assembled, rather than painted, modelled or carved, these works question the nature of art and often break down the traditional distinction between painting and sculpture.

buyer's premium - a percentage of the bid ("hammer") price at an auction. It is usually 5 - 15%.

catalogue raisonné - a scholarly catalogue which should include all the known works by an artist at the time of compilation. Essential information by which works are identified. The definitive reference book.

chromolithography - a method of surface-printing lithographs in many colors which involves no engraving. A different stone or plate is used for each color and is printed in exact register with the others. It is widely used, particularly for posters and other forms of commercial art.

collotype - a method of surface printing. The name is derived from colloid. The process involves water-soluble gelatins which are used to support a light-sensitive solution, with which sheets of plate glass are coated. When contacted with a negative and exposed to light, parts of the gelatin will harden. The plates are printed on lithographic-type presses which alternately ink and dampen the surface. The hard gelatin accepts more ink while the soft gelatin accepts more water. No halftone screen is required because the surface reticulation of the

gelatin breaks up the tone into irregular textures.

compo - (short for composition) term used in the construction of 19th century frames. It is a built-up layer of a putty-like substance that can be formed to create decorative elements to be later gilded.

conte crayon - a proprietary name for a man-made chalk which is widely used in sketching. It is available in black, brown, and red. It was named for Nicholas Conte, who developed the first lead pencil in 1790.

country house condition - refers to the condition of a painting that has been found in the original frame, probably with a glass plate over the image, and most likely still in the hands of descendants of the original owners, possibly still in its original home

cradled panel - a restoration method used to support the back of a wood panel. It usually is constructed in a series of horizontal and vertical wood pieces and applied to the back of an old panel. It keeps the wood from serious warping, allowing for natural expansion and contraction.

craquelure - the result of the uneven movements of the canvas caused by the natural shrinking of the medium on aging. It usually appears on the surface in a "spider-web" like series of cracks. Surface can be stabilized by relining the canvas and restoring the cracks.

daguerreotype - the earliest successful photographic process. It was developed in France by Louis Daguerre in the mid-19th century. It made use of a silver or silver-covered copper plate which was made sensitive to light through the use of chemicals.

engraving - an intaglio printing process. However, it has become a term which has come to refer to all processes for multiplying prints. While there are distinct differences between individual methods of engraving, the chief difference is between reproductive and original engravings. The former reproduce an idea or work of an artist other than the engraver, while original engravings are unique works of art created by the engraver himself.

etching - an intaglio printing process. It is a widely used form of engraving in which the etcher draws on a copper plate which has been covered with an acid-impervious resinous ground, exposing the copper when he wants a line. When a plate is placed in an acid bath, the exposed parts are eaten away. By controlling the depth of the acid "bite", subtle variations in the strength of lines may be achieved. Prints are then made by inking the plate, removing the ink from its surface, and pressing paper onto the plate; the picture is made by the ink in the etched away lines.

fake - a work of art that is made to be sold as something that it is not. It usually involves a type of scam.

forgery - a copy done by someone other than the original artist with the intent to pass off as the original. It is the generic term for both fakes and frauds.

fraud - a work of art that has been altered, misattributed, or otherwise disguised or misrepresented as what it is not.

foxing - a type of mildew which usually forms on paper. It appears as reddish brown fluffy circles that resemble a foxes tail (hence its name). It is caused by excess moisture/humidity. It will worsen in time if not professionally treated.

gouache - an opaque watercolor. The effects achieved are closer to those of oil paint than watercolor. A disadvantage of gouache is that it lightens as it dries.

hammer price - the actual "bid" price at an auction. Does not include the premium.

limner - a designation used originally in the Middle Ages for an illuminator of manuscripts. Beginning in the 16th century it meant painters of miniature portraits. During the 16th-18th centuries it sometimes referred to painters in general. In American art of the late 18th and 19th centuries, it was the name given to the unknown portrait artists, usually of the itinerant type.

linear - a style of painting and drawing where the artist emphasizes outline and drawing. Well known linear artists are Poussin, Copley, Ingres. Its opposite is painterly.

lithography - the only major process of surface printing in which engraving or cutting-out of the surface of the plate is not involved. The design is put on the surface of a stone with a greasy chalk; the stone is wetted and then covered with greasy ink, which is rejected by the wet surface and clings only to those areas which are already greasy.

painterly - the tendency to depict form as patches of colored light and shade, in which edges merge into the background or into one another, best exemplified by the work of Rembrandt. Its opposite is linear.

plate size - size of a print taking the measurement from the impression left from the plate used in the printing process. Usually the image size.

seller's premium - a percentage of the bid ("hammer") price at an auction. It is usually 5 - 15%. It is usually more negotiable than the buyer's premium.

serigraphy (silk screen) - a stenciling printing process. Paint or ink is brushed over unmasked areas of stretched silk on which the design has been fixed. By using successive masks on the same screen, multi-colored prints can be achieved. The process is widely used in commercial art and the textile industry.

tempera - a method of painting on surfaces prepared with gesso in which dry pigments are mixed with egg yolks, white, or sometimes whole eggs to form a water soluble yet binding medium. It was the most commonly used painting method until the late 15th century. The medium dries almost immediately and is permanent.

trompe l'oeil - French for "deceive the eye". The term applied to easel or decorative painting whose purpose is to fool the eye as to the composition or the reality of the objects represented - as with painted money that appears to be real, and the like. In easel painting the technique is normally restricted to the surfaces in or near the plane of the picture.

watermark - design left in the paper by the paper manufacturer. Seen when held against the light. Used to trace the origin of the paper  
Special markings for an artist or publisher may incorporate a signature or a device. Can be used to detect fakes -- although it can be faked.

BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING ARTISTIC PERIODS AND MOVEMENTS:  
WHO ARE THE MAIN PLAYERS IN EACH?

Art Nouveau  
Ashcan School  
Barbizon School  
Baroque  
Bauhaus  
Blue Rider  
Color field  
Constructivism  
Cubism  
Dada  
Expressionism  
Florentine Renaissance  
Folk art  
Futurism  
High Renaissance  
Hudson River School  
Impressionism  
Luminism  
Mannerism  
Minimal art  
Modernism  
Munich school  
Nabis  
Neoclassical  
New Deal Art (WPA)  
New York School  
Op art  
Orientalism  
Orphism  
Photo-realism  
Pop art  
Post-impressionism  
Post-modernism  
Pre-Raphaelite  
Precisionism  
Primitive art  
Realism  
Regionalism  
Rococo  
Romanticism  
Social realism  
Surrealism