



ALL
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PRINT 101

By Amanda Verbeck

Amanda Verbeck, Collaborative Printer and Publisher at Pele Prints, begins her four part print tutorial with an overview of Relief Printing.

When I tell people I'm a printmaker, it's often followed by the question, "What's that?" My short and sweet answer is that I play with big stamps. In truth, it's so much more than that. When you start learning about prints, the jargon, techniques and terms can be overwhelming — photogravure, pochoir, serigraph, mezzotint, collagraph, linocut. And that's just scratching the surface (pun intended, for all you fellow printers). But when you break it down, all of these fancy names and techniques fall into just a few categories.

There are four main categories for traditional printmaking: relief, intaglio, lithography and screenprint. In this first installation of Print 101, I've focused on relief print. Put simply, relief printing is a process where an image is printed from a raised surface. The raised areas of the plate are inked, and the recessed or surrounding areas remain ink free. The plate is most commonly a wood or linoleum block, but it can be made out of any material really. Once the plate is inked, a sheet of paper is placed on top and pressure is applied to transfer the image to the paper.

There are many types of relief prints, including woodcut, linocut, rubber stamp, letterpress, wood engraving, embossments and more. Out of the big four printing techniques, relief printing is the oldest. It made its debut in the 9th century in China. The woodcut has long

since been an important part of Chinese and Japanese art history. In around 1400 it migrated to Europe, and by the 16th century, it became a respected art form in Northern Europe with artists like Albrecht Dürer building their careers with the technology.

Today many artists continue to create relief prints, pushing the boundaries of the medium by using new materials often in non-traditional ways. At my studio, Pele Prints, we use relief

printing in many of our collaborations with artists. Two of our more recent projects, with Laura Berman and Carly Kurka, use a low-tech cutout relief technique. As one of the most direct forms of printmaking, the process is appealing and put to use in all sorts of contexts, from children's art classes all the way to world-renowned art museums. Relief prints are simple, versatile and beautiful.

www.peleprints.com



(image courtesy of Pele Prints)