

# Bracken Press printworkshop

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## Information sheet Engraving



**Engravers** use a hardened steel tool called a burin to cut the design into the surface, most traditionally a copper plate. Gravers come in a variety of shapes and sizes that yield different line types. The burin produces a unique and recognizable quality of line that is characterized by its steady, deliberate appearance and clean edges. The angle tint tool has a slightly curved tip that is commonly used in printmaking. Florentine liners are flat-bottomed tools with multiple lines incised into them, used to do fill work on larger areas. Flat gravers are used for doing fill work on letters, as well as most musical instrument engraving work. Round gravers are commonly used on silver to create bright cuts (also called **bright-cut engraving**), as well as other hard-to-cut metals such as nickel and steel. Burins are either square or elongated diamond-shaped and used for cutting straight lines. Other tools such as mezzotint rockers, roulets and burnishers are used for texturing effects.

Originally, there was only hand engraving. In that process the burin is held in the hand with the handle in the palm of the hand. The point of a new tool is snapped off to a length just longer than the engraver's fingers, and the point reground. The actual engraving is done by a combination of pressure and manipulating the workpiece.

In addition, there are engraving machines. They are usually used for lettering, using a pantographic system. There are versions for the insides of rings and also the outsides of larger pieces. Such machines are commonly used for inscriptions on rings, locket and presentation pieces.

