

Bracken Press **print-workshop**

Information sheet Engraving

Engravers use a hardened steel tool called a burin to cut the design into the surface, most traditionally a copper plate, or box wood. 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.

Bracken Press print-workshop

Information sheet Wood Engraving.

Wood engraving is at once the simplest and one of the most exquisite forms of printmaking. The print is made, first, by engraving the reversed design or picture to be printed into the mirror-smooth surface of a block of end-grain wood.

Box is best, though other woods and synthetic materials are now also used. Secondly, the block is rolled up with ink (on its top surface) and printed onto paper. The cuts that were made into the wood therefore come out as white, the remaining top surface which gets inked, as black; the artist is, in effect, drawing with light – with a white mark as opposed to the black mark that comes from a pencil, brush or pen.

Most wood engravings tend to be closely worked and relatively small because the tools used are finely pointed. Because the finesse of wood engraving produces a particularly rich tonal range, wood engravings are usually, but by no means exclusively, black and white.

Larger images can now be carved (in the same manner as box wood) on a material called Resingrave, a synthetic material designed especially to replicate the quality of boxwood.



- Wood engraving tools (burin) and leather sandbag.

