

Debby Mason

Etchings, Mezzotints & Illustrations



Etching, Aquatint and Printing Process

Etching

An indirect Intaglio technique in which a piece of metal sheet (the plate) - usually copper or zinc - is covered with an acid resistant coating into which is drawn the image revealing the metal. When immersed in acid only these parts of the metal are eaten away. The longer the time in the acid, the deeper will be the line and the darker it will appear when printed because it holds more ink.

Aquatint

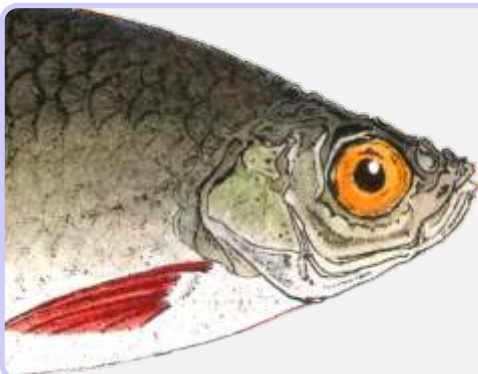
This is the term used to describe the process of adding tone (not colour) to a line etching. Instead of a surface of wax the metal plate is given a thin layer of resin dust which, when heated, adheres to the metal. The resin protects the metal from acid but allows the acid to attack the metal between the resin grains. This produces a fine network of "valleys" which hold ink. Varying the depth of the valleys will vary the amount of ink held and thus vary the tone value.

Printing the Plate

The plate is heated and stiff ink rubbed into it, then using small circular motions and a pad of wiping canvas, excess ink is removed, this is repeated, gradually using cleaner canvas. Finally, the plate is 'hand-wiped'; this removes plate tone and allows the lines to become more sharply defined. The paper for printing needs to be soaked and laid down for a number of days, this softens the paper, so that when it is printed it is forced more easily into the grooves of the plate. The pressure required for printing is great, several tons, and this is achieved by using an Etching Press. The press is a large mechanical device, with two main rollers placed above each other with a flat bed of steel that travels between the two. The sliding bed is moved from one end of the press to the other, with the inked plate resting face up. The paper is placed over it and then several wool blankets on top. The blankets are compressed as the rollers move, thus forcing the paper into the plate and so lifts out the ink. Once the plate is printed, the paper is carefully removed from the plate, a sheet of tissue paper is laid over the print and it is left between sheets of blotting paper under a heavy board to dry for a few days. The plate needs to be re-inked and re-wiped for each print!



All prints are etchings, hand printed and hand coloured - Each edition (between 50 and 250) is a limited set of identical prints taken from the finished plate. Each print is individually and consecutively numbered. Once the edition is completed the plate is destroyed by drilling a hole through it, or engraving a line across it to prevent further printing.



Debby Mason
Lake Cottage, The Old Wharf, Oreston
Plymouth, Devon. PL9 7PT
Telephone: +44 (0) 1752 492927
Mobile: +44 (0) 7836 292741

Email: debby@debbymason.com
Website: www.debbymason.com



For more information please visit www.debbymason.com

All images & designs Copyright Debby Mason © 2011



Debby Mason was first inspired to begin etching whilst studying 'A' Levels at Plymouth College. She went on to complete a foundation course at Exeter College of Art and Design before going on to achieve a BA (Hons) degree in Printmaking at West Surrey College of Art and Design. She was awarded one of three Whatman Paper prizes for the most outstanding printmaker under the age of 35 by The Royal Society of Painter - Etchers and Engravers

Debby now has a workshop at her home in Plymouth where over the last few years she has specialised in etchings of marine life. She is a keen diver, both in her home waters of Plymouth Sound and occasional diving trips abroad for inspiration!

The Natural History Museum in London has requested her etchings for charity fund raising on behalf of the Museum Development Trust. An exhibition 'Tiger Tails & Dancing Dragons' was on show at London Zoo for 7 years (2001 to 2008) and has so far raised over £6000 for 'Project Seahorse' a conservation/education organisation. She is also involved with EAZA Turtle & Tortoise campaign 'ShellShock'

She feels most strongly that we constantly take and profit from the sea and put very little of any good back in to it

For two years DEFRA have given Debby's work as ministerial gifts

Exhibitions

2002 Aquarium Finisterrae in La Coruna, Spain.
2006/7 L'Oceanografic in Valencia.
2007 'The Deep' in Hull until October
2007 Dartmouth - Higher Street Gallery
2007 - The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition
2008 - Illustrations for 'The Game Cook' cookbook by Norman Tebbit
2008/9 - Commission from the Isle of Man Government for fish pictures for an educational poster
2009 - The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition
2011 - The Royal Academy Summer Exhibition