

SIGNING AN EDITIONED PRINT

ART 125 _ SILKSCREEN

As artists we have a certain level of creative freedom in all that we do. This creative freedom certainly extends to certain parameters of the print universe and its various suborbital techniques - including SCREENPRINTING / SERIGRAPHY. In this way when discussing signatures and signature placement on screenprints we might begin our discussion by noting that the artist as creator of the print has artistic license to sign their print in any manner and in any location upon the print they deem desirable. Some artists, for instance, prefer to affix their signatures to the back (verso) of their prints rather than the front (recto).

Recognizing this creative license, it is important to note that over the centuries, during the evolution of various printmaking media, certain conventions have evolved regarding the nature and placement of artist's signatures on printed works of fine art. In this regard the following information may be helpful.

Signature placement: Tradition has it that the artist's signature will be placed in the open area below the lower right corner of the print. The signature is below the print not off to the side.

Title: The title is traditionally placed below the center of the image at the bottom of the print.

Edition number: The edition number is generally placed below the left corner of the image. It usually takes the form of a simple fraction. For example, the first print in an edition of fifty images is numbered 1/50, the second image is numbered 2/50 and so on.

Special characters : There are special characters that are employed to designate the special status of print images. Among these are the following:

A/P (Artist's Proof) - Originally the artist was able to pull a number of prints out with their edition for personal use (e.g. if the edition was being retained by an agent). These are normally printed at the same time as the edition, are of the same high standard, and number up to 10% of the edition size.

B.A.T (Bon a Tirer) - The first perfect print to be pulled from the matrix is signed as the B.A.T. (good to pull). The edition and artist's proofs are then matched up to this as it is printed. The B.A.T. usually remains the property of the editioning atelier.

T/P (Trial proof) - These prints are pulled to assess the development of an image. They are marked as trial proofs as they indicate the unfinished progress of a work. They can be worth large sums if they land on the market as they show an insight into the artists working methods.

H/C (Hors Commerce) - These prints are not for sale but are marked for commercial/business use such as display or promotion. They do not have to be signed by the artist

C/P (Cancellation print) - When the edition has been printed, the plate is defaced in such a way that it cannot be reprinted in the original manner. Often a print is pulled with a large score across the plate and is signed as the cancellation print.

Monoprint or monotype - This refers to the technique of printing a single painted image from a silkscreen or non porous surface such as a sheet of glass, metal or styrene. In either case, the print is unique and cannot be editioned.

U/P (Unique Print), **U/S** (Unique State), **V/E** (Variable Edition) - These labels all refer to the print being unique or containing unique elements that cannot be exactly reproduced in another pulling. These three labels are probably best replaced with using the simple convention **1/1** (edition of 1)

Signing Media: Although pencil is widely used in signing editioned fine art prints some artists prefer to sign in more permanent media including fine tipped markers, ball; point pens, etc. Keep in mind that the choice is yours but always consider the effect that