

INFOCUS photobid

GLOSSARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC TERMS

The following is a selected glossary of photographic terms used on the exhibition labels to describe objects offered in the INFOCUS PhotoBid auction.

SPECIAL NOTES:

Dates

When two dates are offered, the earlier is the date the negative was made and the later is the date the print was made. If only one date appears, it is most likely the date the negative was made.

Editions

An edition comprises all prints released within a single publishing event. Some photographers create a numbered limited edition for specific photographs. When that information is known, it has been provided on the object labels. We provide the total number of prints in the edition and which print number is offered for sale.

In addition, artists may make a small number of Artist Proofs, prints that are not part of any numbered edition but are of equal quality; these are labeled "AP." Generally, the number of Artist Proofs released for sale is not greater than 10% of the total edition size.

If there is only a single print in the edition or if the object is one of a kind, it will be marked "unique." Conversely, if the artist does not limit the number of prints made from a negative, the edition is designated as "open" or "uneditioned."

Papers and Other Supports

All photographic objects include a "primary support," the substrate onto which a photographic image is printed. When most people think of a photographic print, they probably imagine it on paper. However, the diversity of materials and modes of presentation to be found in this year's auction shows just how varied photographic objects can be. They include:

- Archival fine art papers, including cotton rag papers, vellums, and traditional Japanese papers such as gampi. These paper types can be used in the production of carbon-based photomechanical prints such as photogravures, as well as platinum/palladium prints and inkjet prints, to name a few.
- Baryta papers, which consist of a paper base coated with a layer of baryta, or barium sulphate, a brightener. Baryta coatings are found in typical gelatin silver prints. Additionally, baryta-coated papers that mimic the look of gelatin silver papers are manufactured for use in inkjet printing.
- Non-paper supports. While most of the photographs on these walls are printed on paper, one photographic printing process represented in this year's PhotoBid Auction uses a non-paper primary support: Kate Breakey's orotone Reclining Nude is printed on glass.

Some of the objects on display also include a "secondary support," another piece of material that the primary support is affixed to for display purposes. Paper prints may be mounted on a variety of secondary supports, including thick paper or board, foam core, wood panel, or Dibond, which is the brand name of a smooth, strong, and lightweight aluminum composite board.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESSES:

Archival Inkjet Print/Inkjet Print

A variety of inkjet printing processes are used produce images from a digital source. Tiny droplets of liquid color are shot through a row of fine nozzles to render images in either black and white or color. Some inkjet printers only use pigments and some use a combination of pigments and dyes. Inkjet prints can be made on a variety of supports, which allow for different surface textures, brightnesses, and a range finishes from glossy to matte. (See Papers and Other Supports)

Archival Pigment Print/Pigment Print

A high-resolution digital print from an inkjet printer that is made solely of pigment (not dyes), which delivers a wide range of colors and longevity. (See Archival Inkjet Print/Inkjet Print)

Chromogenic Print

Chromogenic color prints are composed of a paper support and three main dye layers—cyan, magenta, and yellow—that together form a full-color image. The light-sensitive emulsion in each layer is silver halide, the same one found in black-and-white papers. After exposure with an enlarger, the print is immersed in a color developer. In this reaction, the color developer in the areas of exposed silver oxidizes and reacts with another chemical, the dye coupler, which is present throughout the layers of emulsion. This is the chromogenic reaction—the union of the oxidized developer and the dye coupler forms a color dye. A series of processing steps follow, which remove the remaining silver and silver compounds, leaving a color image composed of dyes in three layers. This process was the most common type of color photographic printing during the twentieth century.

Cibachrome

Cibachrome is a trade name for the Ciba Corporation's version of the silver dye bleach color printing process. Cibachrome prints are instantly recognizable for their bright, saturated colors and glossy surface sheen. The process was introduced in the 1960s as a way of producing prints from the popular 35 mm color slides of the day. Silver dye bleach papers are made up of a support—either resin-coated paper, acetate, or polyester—coated with three separate silver halide emulsions sensitized to red, green, and blue light. Each emulsion layer contains a dye in its corresponding complementary hue: red with cyan, green with magenta, and blue with yellow. The film positive is exposed onto the paper with an enlarger, and the paper is developed, then bleached. The bleaching stage removes dye from each emulsion layer in proportion to the amount of image-forming silver present, forming a positive color image.

Contact Print

A photographic negative is placed directly on top of light-sensitized material, such as a sheet of photographic paper. The light passes through the negative, exposing the paper. This method produces a photograph with the same dimensions as the negative and retains a higher degree of detail than an enlarged image.

Cyanotype

The cyanotype, or blueprint, process renders images in a vibrant blue, created by the oxidation of light-sensitive iron in the emulsion. The image is formed solely through exposure to light; in other words, the photographic paper does not need to be immersed in developer for the image to appear on its surface. A negative is placed in contact with the paper surface and the negative-paper package is exposed to UV light, traditionally sunlight. The paper is then washed in water to remove unexposed image-forming metallic particles, leaving behind a monochromatic blue image.

Gelatin Silver Print

Gelatin silver prints are created by using papers coated with an emulsion of gelatin containing silver salts. The silver salts consist of either silver bromide or silver chloride or a combination of the two. Because gelatin silver coated papers are highly sensitive to light, they allow photographers to resize negatives through projection rather than relying on contact printing. Images have a broad range of black, gray and white tones. The surface can be glossy, matte or somewhere in between. Introduced in 1871, this process dominated twentieth-century fine art photography and was the most common means of making black and white prints from negatives.

Non-traditional Alteration

Several of the pieces in this year's PhotoBid Auction have altered using methods other than those traditionally associated with photographic printing. Marie Navarre's prints, for example, incorporate hand sewing. Christopher Colville created *Untitled 11-07-13* by igniting gunpowder on the surface of a sheet of light-sensitive gelatin silver paper.

Orotone

To create an orotone, a photographic image is printed on glass and the back (the non-image bearing side) is colored gold, which can be achieved using gold-colored pigment or gold leaf. The resulting image appears suffused with golden light.

Platinum/Palladium Print

This process embeds light-sensitive salts of either platinum or palladium—or a combination of the two—into paper in preparation for contact printing. Contact printing is a way of producing an image in which the photographic negative is placed directly on top of the light sensitive paper. The light passes through the negative, exposing the paper below it. The resulting monochrome images display a high level of detail and a rich tonal range with a matte finish. (See Contact Print)

Toning

Toning refers to a group of chemical processes performed in the darkroom to alter the hue of black and white silver prints. (See Gelatin Silver Print)