



PRINTMAKING

The **stonecut** print is unique to Canada's north. It is a variation on the age-old medium of the woodcut, in which the area to appear on the paper is uncut, or left in relief, while those areas which are not to appear in print are cut away, leaving a series of raised images on the face of the stone. This raised area is inked, and a thin sheet of paper, usually fine, Japanese mulberry or kozo paper, is placed over the inked surface. A protective sheet of tissue is placed over this sheet, and the paper is then pressed gently against the stone by hand with a small padded disc. Only one print can be obtained from each inking of the stone. The stencil is made by cutting into heavy paper, strengthened by candle wax melted onto its surface. Ink is then stenciled or brushed onto the paper through the cut out design.

Lithography was introduced at the Kinngait Studios in the early 1970's. Unlike stonecuts and etchings, hand lithography requires no cutting of the surface from which the prints are made. Instead the design is simply drawn on the surface of a piece of limestone or aluminum plate. The drawing is done with grease pencils or with a greasy liquid, which is then inked with a grease-based ink. The clear portions of the stone or plate are covered with a thin film of water, which repels the greasy ink, thereby confining the ink to the area already defined by the original grease-based drawing. Any colour of ink can be rolled onto an image, although multi-colour prints generally require a separate stone or plate for each colour.

Under tremendous pressure, the entire sandwich of inked stone or plate, paper and tympan (protective covering) is cranked by hand through a press. The background image transfers to the paper.

In recent years, several lithographs have included the application of **chine collé**. This technique involves pressing a thin sheet of sized oriental paper to a heavier backing sheet and printing both at the same time, adding another dimension of colour and texture to the final image.

Various forms of **intaglio printing** have also been part of the Kinngait Studios' media, including copper engraving and etching. In **etching**, the impression is made by pushing the paper into inked depressions and recesses in a metal plate. First, an acid-resistant substance called a ground is applied to the surface of the plate. The artist then draws the image through the ground using an etching needle. The entire plate is then immersed in an acid bath, so that the drawn areas exposed by the needle are etched or "eaten" into. Finally, the remaining ground is removed with solvent, and the plate is prepared for printing. In printing, the inked plate is laid face up on the flat bed of the etching press, and dampened paper is placed on top of the plate, covered by several layers of felt blankets. This is run through the press, compressing the felts which forces the paper into the inked grooves on the plate, thereby transferring the drawn image to the paper.

Aquatint is a method of etching tonal areas into the plate. This technique is often used in conjunction with linear etching or engraving.