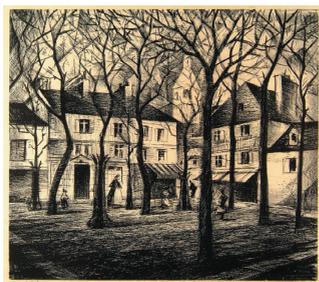




David Hockney, R.A. (b.1937) *Views of Hotel Well II* (T.281: DH68) lithograph printed in colours, 1985, signed in pencil and dated, No. 24 of 75, blind stamp of the publisher, Tyler Graphics Limited, original wood frame designed by the artist, stained red, yellow and black. Overall 75 x 93cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £8,800. ABP: £10,351.*



Nevinson (Christopher Richard Wynne, 1889-1946). *Place du Tertre, Montmartre*, lithograph, signed, titled and inscribed 'On her wedding to darling little H, ISne from Kathleen & C. R. W. Nevinson' to lower margin, image size approx 16 x 18in, framed and glazed, early label of A. J. Mucklow & Son, Leicester Square, to verso. *Dominic Winter, South Cerney, Gos. Jul 06. HP: £5,000. ABP: £5,881.*



Georges Braque (1882-1963) *French colour lithograph, L'Oiseau multicolore*, signed in pencil, inscribed and numbered 107/200, 10 x 19.25in. *Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £1,600. ABP: £1,882.*



Paul Nash, (1889-1946) *unframed lithograph, Landscape with Megaliths*, 23 x 33in. *Gorrings, Lewes. Sep 05. HP: £1,250. ABP: £1,470.*



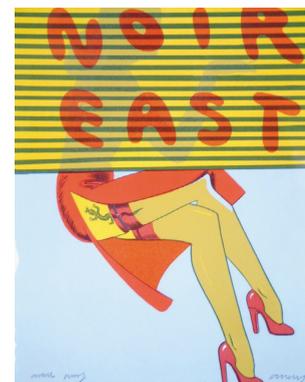
Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970) *lithograph, 'A Pantomime'*, signed in pencil, 13.75 x 9.75in. *Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*



After John Piper, *Halifax*, signed in pencil with initials and numbered 47/70, coloured lithograph, 38 x 60cm. *Locke & England, Leamington Spa. May 05. HP: £640. ABP: £752.*



Keith Vaughan, *'The Walled Garden'*, 1951, lithograph in colours, signed, dedicated and dated June '66, pencil, 49.5 x 65.5cm, unframed. *Rosebery's, London. Sep 04. HP: £620. ABP: £729.*



Allen Jones, R.A. *'Noir East'*, lithograph in colours, signed, dated '73 and inscribed 'Artist's Proof' in pencil, 37.5 x 34.2cm. *Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*

Collecting Prints. Part One: Lithographs

by Chris Murray

The chameleon-like capacity of lithographs to imitate other graphic media has not been lost on the dishonest, and the unwary can easily buy a drawing or woodcut that is in fact a lithograph.

Invented just over 200 years ago, lithography introduced an entirely new way of making prints. Its technical advantages and extraordinarily expressive range have made it popular with both artist and commercial printers to this day.

Its creator, around 1798, was Alois Senefelder, a German actor, playwright and entrepreneur who was looking for an inexpensive method of reproducing music scores, which up to this time had to be handwritten. Also an amateur artist, he soon saw his new method had potential and he took out patents across Europe. Commercial publishers took to it eagerly for book illustrations, prints (usually reproductions of works of art) and posters, for which it is particularly well suited, since lithographs can be much larger than other prints. Toulouse-Lautrec's celebrated posters of Parisian nightlife are lithographs.

The technique is based on the simple fact that water and grease do not mix. Traditionally, the design is made on a thick block of smooth, hard limestone (litho-graphy means 'drawing on stone') that is found only in Solnhofen in southern Germany. As supplies of this are now very limited, specially prepared plates of either zinc or aluminium are widely used today.

The design is drawn with a greasy ink sometimes know by its German name, Tusche. This is absorbed into the stone and so creates areas permanently receptive to ink. The stone is then wetted and a greasy printing ink spread over it: this adheres to the design but not to the wetted areas. Paper is then pressed firmly onto the stone and the design transferred. A colour print (chromolithograph) is created by using several stones, one for each colour.

At first this might seem a rather crude process, but in fact it is capable of the most extraordinary subtlety and range. This is because of the way the ink can be applied to the plate. If a pen is used, the resulting print is very like an ink drawing. Lithographic ink can even be diluted to create washes (Richard Bawden), or flicked or spattered on the stone to create grainy effects. Toulouse-Lautrec was particularly fond of this technique. If a lithographic crayon is used, then the print is just like a crayon drawing. (Jacob Kramer, Jean Cocteau) And so on. It is also possible, using a photosensitive medium, to transfer photographic images. Even print produced by other techniques (such as etchings or woodcuts) can be reproduced. This chameleon-like capacity to imitate other graphic media has not been lost on the dishonest, and the unwary can easily buy a drawing or woodcut that is in fact a lithograph.

A further refinement was created through the development of transfer printing. Here a design is drawn on paper, a method that's clearly more convenient than working on a large, heavy stone. The drawing is then placed face-down on the stone and pressure is applied until the design has been transferred. The paper is then peeled or dissolved away with water.

One great advantage of lithography is that it is capable of very long print runs. Etchings and engraving plates, together with woodcut blocks, wear down through printing, and so images lose their definition. But lithographs, because they are printed from a flat surface, don't wear away and so prints can remain sharp and clear. During the first half of the nineteenth century, lithography was exploited by many artists, notably in France, with Géricault, Delacroix and Daumier leading the way. It was then largely

neglected by artists (though still very widely used by commercial printers) until rediscovered in the late nineteenth century, again largely in France, by artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec, Renoir, Degas and Bonnard. It has been popular throughout the twentieth century, artists being particularly attracted by its capacity for bold effects and strong colours. The French School is particularly strong (Braque, Picasso, Chagall, Matisse and countless others) but many British artists have exploited its potential, including Christopher Nevinson, Laura Knight, Paul Nash, John Piper, Henry Moore, Keith Vaughan, Allen Jones, David Hockney and John Bellamy, to name just a few.

Collecting lithographs

As so many lithographs have been produced, there are countless opportunities for collectors, and as a glance at this selection from the *Antiques Info* database shows, the price range is wide. Attractive lithographs can be bought at auction for as little as £25 (Bryan Organ) - and occasionally, be a happy fluke, for far less when an 'Israeli School, *Figures by a tree, lithograph in colours, signed and dated 177/250, 40 x 26cm, unframed*', sold at Rosebery's, London. Jan 2006, for a hammer price of £5!

A great many art lithographs fall into the £200 to £1,000 range, though with artists who have, for one reason or another, attracted the sometimes fickle attention of the market, prices can soar. Christopher Nevinson and David Hockney are examples.

Checklist for buyers

There are several key points to consider when buying lithographs.

Artist.

As in any area of art collecting, the status of the artist will largely determine a print's collectability. But it is important to remember, (a) that because of the vagaries of the market, an artist's standing, especially if they're not of the top rank, is not always a guarantee of either quality or long-term value; and (b) that there are countless little-known artists who have produced works of outstanding quality. Don't be afraid to follow your own tastes and interests. The real test is whether you can live with a work and continue to derive pleasure from it.

Authenticity.

If you are buying works of some value, you ought to consider their provenance, and be prepared to do some research. Consult catalogues and price guides, and ask for an expert's opinion.

Signature and number.

The presence of a signature adds greatly to the value of a print, as long as it is a hand-written signature (typically in pencil, lower right-hand corner), not simply one 'in the plate', or 'on the stone', that is, part of the print itself. The number of a print is also important, generally lower left-hand corner. As noted above, lithographs can be printed in large numbers, so a 'limited edition' could be as high as a few thousand. Bryan Organ's delightful owl and hawk prints are from a run of 1175. In general, the lower the print run, the better.

Condition.

As always in collecting, condition is paramount, so check that the colours are not faded, that the ink is evenly spread, and that the paper is not torn, creased, marked or stained. These flaws may be hidden by a mount. With colour lithographs, each stone (colour) has to align exactly with the previous one. If they are not, there can be a slight blurring of definition.

If you want to know, there's Bamber Gascoigne's *How to Identify Prints*, Thames & Hudson, 1986 (an excellent guide to prints in general), and, more specifically, Domenico Porzio's *Lithography: 200 Years of Art, History & Technique*, Bracken Books, 1982, a lavishly illustrated history.



Henry Moore, portrait of an Elephant's Head, limited edition lithograph, 38/50, signed in pencil, 12.5 x 10.5in, ebonised frame. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Jun 06. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*



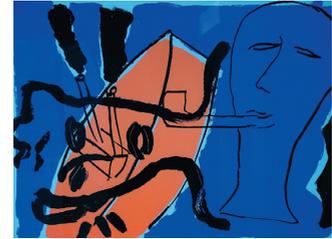
John Bellamy, lithograph 'Bethel', signed in pencil, 30 x 22.5in. *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Jun 06. HP: £210. ABP: £247.*



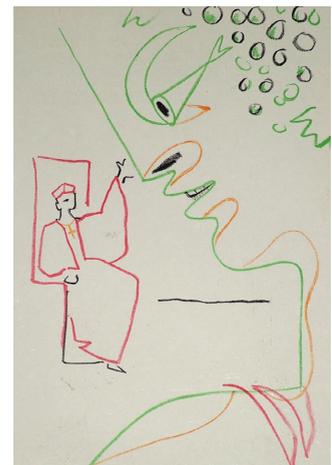
Richard Bawden, (b.1936) View through a Window, lithograph, signed in pencil, 41 x 45cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 06. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



Jacob Kramer, Portrait of Jacob Epstein, lithograph, signed, 57.5 x 45.2cm. *Rosebery's, London. Sep 04. HP: £90. ABP: £105.*



Bruce Maclean b.1944, Man with a pipe, lithograph in colours, signed and numbered 2/50 in pencil, 48 x 65.8cm, After Anne Norfolk 20thC, House in the Woods 1988, publ. by Brandler Galleries, Essex, colour reproduction print, signed and numbered 453/850 in pencil, After Janet R Woolley b.1952, Three figures by a table, colour reproduction print, signed and dated 83 in pen. (3) *Rosebery's, London. Aug 06. HP: £90. ABP: £105.*



After Jean Cocteau, 'Les Monstres Scares', lithograph printed in colours, publ. Paris 1940, 22 x 15cm with two other lithographs after Jean Cocteau titled 'Renaud et Armide', Comedie Francaise, Paris 1934 and one depicting a Harlequin printed in black, signed within the plate. (3) (part unframed) *Rosebery's, London. Jan 06. HP: £70. ABP: £82.*



Bryan Organ b.1935, Owl and Hawk, lithographs, a pair; both signed and numbered 30/1175 in pencil, 29 x 24.3cm each. (2) *Rosebery's, London. Aug 06. HP: £25. ABP: £29.*