

## Module 6: Media for Two-Dimensional Art

Artists find ways to express themselves with almost anything available. It is a stamp of their creativity to make extraordinary images and objects from various but fairly ordinary materials. From charcoal, paper and thread to paint, ink and found objects like leaves, artists continue to search for ways to construct and deliver their message.

This module explores traditional and non-traditional mediums associated with **two-dimensional** artworks including:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Printmaking
- Collage

Two-dimensional media are grouped into general categories. Let's look at each group to understand their particular qualities and how artists use them.

### 1. Drawing

**Drawing** is the simplest and most efficient way to communicate visual ideas, and for centuries charcoal, chalk, graphite and paper have been adequate enough tools to launch some of the most [profound](#) images in art. Leonardo da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist* wraps all four figures together in what is essentially an extended family portrait. Da Vinci draws the figures in a spectacularly realistic style, one that emphasizes individual identities and surrounds the figures in a grand, unfinished landscape. He animates the scene with the Christ child pulling himself forward, trying to release himself from Mary's grasp to get closer to a young John the Baptist on the right, who himself is turning toward the Christ child with a look of curious interest in his younger cousin.

The traditional role of drawing was to make sketches for larger compositions to be manifest as paintings, sculpture or even [architecture](#). Because of its relative immediacy, this function for drawing continues today. A preliminary sketch by the contemporary architect [Frank Gehry](#) captures the complex organic [forms](#) of the buildings he [designs](#).

### **Types of Drawing Media**

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**Dry Media** includes charcoal, graphite, chalks and pastels. Each of these mediums gives the artist a wide range of mark making capabilities and effects, from thin lines to large areas of color and tone. The artist can manipulate a drawing to achieve desired effects in many ways, including exerting different pressures on the medium against the drawing's surface, or by erasure, blotting or rubbing.

This process of drawing can instantly transfer the sense of character to an image. From energetic to subtle, these qualities are apparent in the simplest works: the immediate and unalloyed spirit of the artist's idea. You can see this in the self-portraits of two German artists; [Kathe Kollwitz](#) and [Ernst Ludwig Kirchner](#). Wounded during the first world war, his *Self-Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine* from about 1916 presents us with a nightmarish vision of himself wrapped in the fog of opiate drugs. His hollow eyes and the graphic dysfunction of his marks attest to the power of his drawing.



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Self Portrait Under the Influence of Morphine*, around 1916.  
Ink on paper.

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**Graphite** media includes pencils, powder or compressed sticks. Each one creates a range of values depending on the hardness or softness inherent in the material. Hard graphite tones range from light to dark gray, while softer graphite allows a range from light gray to nearly black. French sculptor Gaston Lachaise's *Standing Nude with Drapery* is a pencil drawing that fixes the energy and sense of movement of the figure to the paper in just a few strokes. And Steven Talasnik's contemporary large-scale [drawings](#) in graphite, with their swirling, organic forms and architectural structures are testament to the power of pencil (and eraser) on paper.

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Gaston Lachaise, *Standing Nude with Drapery*, 1891.  
Graphite and ink on paper. Honolulu Academy of Arts.  
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**Charcoal**, perhaps the oldest form of drawing media, is made by simply charring wooden sticks or small branches, called **vine** charcoal, but is also available in a mechanically **compressed** form. Vine charcoal comes in three densities: soft, medium and hard, each one handling a little different than the other. Soft charcoals give a more velvety feel to a drawing. The artist doesn't have to apply as much pressure to the stick in order to get a solid mark. Hard vine charcoal offers more control but generally doesn't give the darkest tones. Compressed charcoals give deeper blacks than vine charcoal, but are more difficult to manipulate once they are applied to paper.



Left: vine charcoal sticks. Right: compressed charcoal squares.  
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Charcoal drawings can range in value from light grays to rich, velvety blacks. A charcoal [drawing](#) by American artist Georgia O’Keeffe is a good example.

**Pastels** are essentially colored chalks usually compressed into stick form for better handling. They are characterized by soft, subtle changes in tone or color. Pastel pigments allow for a resonant quality that is more difficult to obtain with graphite or charcoal. Picasso’s [Portrait of the Artist’s Mother](#) from 1896 emphasizes these qualities.



Pastels.

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More recent developments in dry media are **oil pastels**, pigment mixed with an organic oil binder that deliver a heavier mark and lend themselves to more graphic and vibrant results. The drawings of [Beverly Buchanan](#) reflect this. Her [work](#) celebrates rural life of the south centered in the forms of old houses and shacks. The buildings stir memories and provide a sense of place, and are usually surrounded by people, flowers and bright landscapes. She also creates sculptures of the shacks, giving them an identity beyond their physical presence.

### **Wet media**

**Ink:** Wet drawing media traditionally refers to ink but really includes any substance that can be put into solution and applied to a drawing's surface. Because wet media is manipulated much like paint – through thinning and the use of a brush – it blurs the line between drawing and painting. Ink can be applied with a stick for linear effects and by brush to cover large areas with tone. It can also be diluted with water to create values of gray. [The Return of the Prodigal Son](#) by Rembrandt shows an expressive use of brown ink in both the line qualities and the larger brushed areas that create the illusion of light and shade.

**Felt tip** pens are considered a form of wet media. The ink is saturated into felt strips inside the pen then released onto the paper or other support through the tip. The ink quickly dries, leaving a permanent mark. The colored marker drawings of [Donnabelle Casis](#) have a flowing, organic character to them. The abstract quality of the subject matter infers body parts and viscera.

Other liquids can be added to drawing media to enhance effects – or create new ones. Artist Jim Dine has splashed soda onto charcoal drawings to make the surface bubble with effervescence. The result is a visual texture unlike anything he could create with charcoal alone, although his work is known for its strong [manipulation](#). Dine's drawings often use both dry and liquid media. His subject matter includes animals, plants, figures and tools, many times crowded together in dense, darkly romantic [images](#).

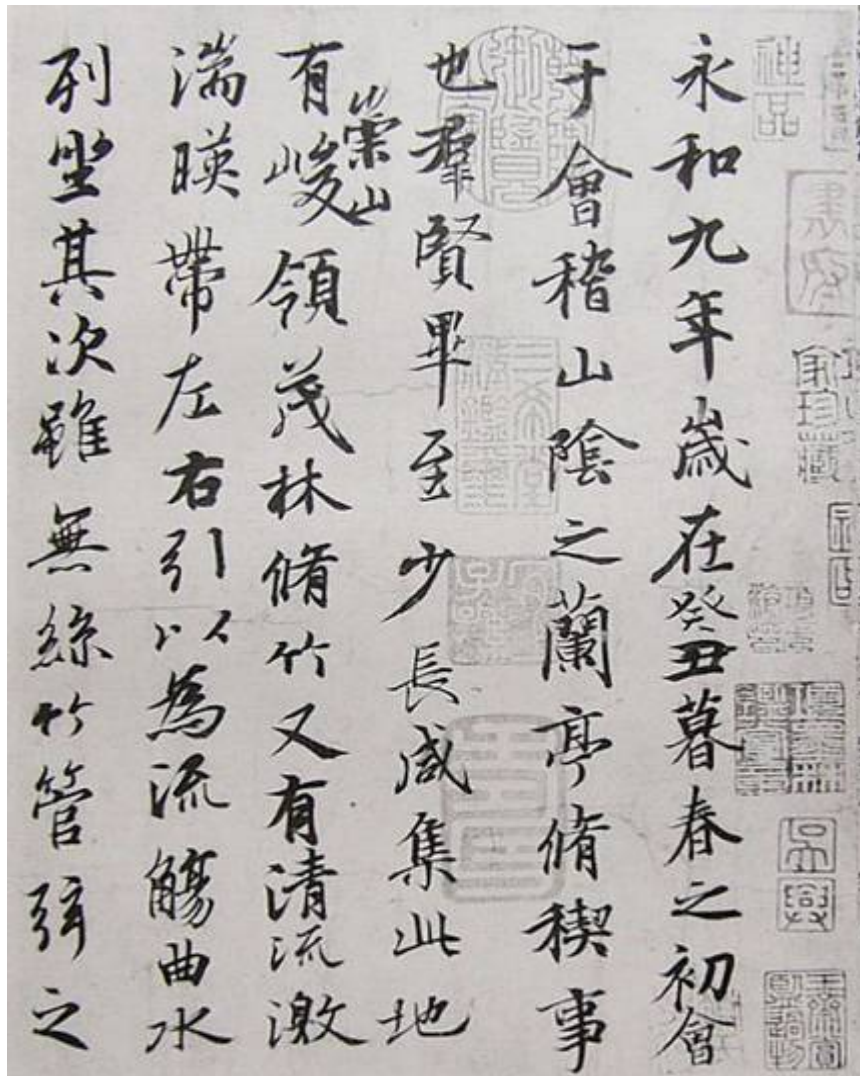
Traditional Chinese painting uses water-based inks and pigments. In fact, it is one of the oldest continuous artistic traditions in the world. Painted on supports of paper or silk, the subject matter includes landscapes, animals, figures and **calligraphy**, an art form that uses letters and script in fluid, lyrical gestures.

Two examples of traditional Chinese painting are seen below. The first, a wall scroll painted by [Ma Lin](#) in 1246, demonstrates how adept the artist is in using ink in an expressive form to denote figures, robes and landscape elements, especially the strong, gnarled forms of the pine trees. There is sensitivity and boldness in the work. The second example is the opening detail of a copy of "[Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion](#)" made before the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Using ink and brush, the artist makes language into art through the sure, gestural strokes and marks of the characters.



Ma Lin, *Wall Scroll*, ink on silk. 1246

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Opening detail of a copy of *Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion*. Before the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Hand scroll, ink on paper. The Palace Museum, Beijing.

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Drawing is a foundation for other two and three-dimensional works of art, even being incorporated with digital media that expands the idea of its formal expression. The art of [Matthew Ritchie](#) starts with small abstract drawings. He digitally scans and projects them to large scales, taking up entire walls. Ritchie also uses the scans to produce large, thin three-dimensional templates to create sculptures out of the original drawings.

## **2. Painting**

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**Painting** is the application of pigments to a support surface that establishes an image, design or decoration. In art the term 'painting' describes both the act and the result. Most painting is created with pigment in liquid form and applied with a brush. Exceptions to this are found in Navajo [sand painting](#) and Tibetan [mandala painting](#), where powdered pigments are used. Painting as a medium has survived for thousands of years and is, along with drawing and sculpture, one of the oldest creative mediums. It's used in some form by cultures around the world.

Three of the most recognizable images in Western art history are paintings: Leonardo da Vinci's [Mona Lisa](#), Edvard Munch's [The Scream](#) and Vincent van Gogh's [The Starry Night](#). These three art works are examples of how painting can go beyond a simple mimetic function, that is, to only imitate what is seen. The power in great painting is that it transcends perceptions to reflect emotional, psychological, even spiritual levels of the human condition.

Painting mediums are extremely versatile because they can be applied to many different surfaces (called **supports**) including paper, wood, canvas, plaster, clay, lacquer and concrete. Because paint is usually applied in a liquid or semi-liquid state it has the ability to soak into porous support material, which can, over time, weaken and damage the it. To prevent this a support is usually first covered with **aground**, a mixture of binder and chalk that, when dry, creates a non-porous layer between the support and the painted surface. A typical ground is [gesso](#).

There are six major painting mediums, each with specific individual characteristics:

- Encaustic
- Tempera
- Fresco
- Oil
- Acrylic
- Watercolor

All of them use three basic ingredients:

- Pigment
- Binder
- Solvent

**Pigments** are granular solids incorporated into the paint to contribute color. The **binder**, commonly referred to as the *vehicle*, is the actual film-forming component of paint. The binder holds the pigment in solution until it's ready to be dispersed onto the surface.

The **solvent** controls the flow and application of the paint. It's mixed into the paint,

usually with a brush, to dilute it to the proper *viscosity*, or thickness, before it's applied to the surface. Once the solvent has evaporated from the surface the remaining paint is fixed there. Solvents range from water to oil-based products like linseed oil and mineral spirits.

Let's look at each of the six main painting mediums:

1. **Encaustic** paint mixes dry pigment with a heated beeswax binder. The mixture is then brushed or spread across a support surface. Reheating allows for longer manipulation of the paint. Encaustic dates back to the first century C.E. and was used extensively in funerary mummy [portraits](#) from Fayum in Egypt. The characteristics of encaustic painting include strong, resonant colors and extremely durable paintings. Because of the beeswax binder, when encaustic cools it forms a tough skin on the surface of the painting.

The twentieth-century American artist, Jasper Johns used encaustic techniques in his compositions. In his work, *Flag* (1954-1955), Jasper used a combination of encaustic, oil, and collage on fabric mounted on plywood.



Jasper Johns Flag

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Modern electric and gas tools allow for extended periods of heating and paint manipulation. Goldberg uses a blowtorch.

**2. *Tempera*** paint combines pigment with an egg yolk binder, then thinned and released with water. Like encaustic, tempera has been used for thousands of years. It dries quickly to a durable matte finish. Tempera paintings are traditionally applied in successive thin layers, called [glazes](#), painstakingly built up using networks of cross hatched lines. Because of this technique tempera paintings are known for their detail.



Duccio, *The Crevole Madonna*, c. 1280. Tempera on board.

Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, Italy

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In early Christianity, tempera was used extensively to paint images of religious icons. The pre-Renaissance Italian artist Duccio (c. 1255 – 1318), one of the most influential artists of the time, used tempera paint in the creation of *The Crevole Madonna* (above). You can see the sharpness of line and shape in this well-preserved work, and the detail he renders in the face and skin tones of the Madonna (see the detail below).



Contemporary painters still use tempera as a medium. American painter Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009) used tempera to create [Christina's World](#), a masterpiece of detail, composition and mystery.

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**3. Fresco** painting is used exclusively on plaster walls and ceilings. The medium of fresco has been used for thousands of years, but is most associated with its use in Christian images during the Renaissance period in Europe.

There are two forms of fresco: **Buon** or “wet”, and **secco**, meaning “dry”.

Buon fresco technique consists of painting in pigment mixed with water on a thin layer of wet, fresh [lime mortar](#) or [plaster](#). The pigment is applied to and absorbed by the wet plaster; after a number of hours, the plaster dries and reacts with the air: it is this

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chemical reaction that fixes the pigment particles in the plaster. Because of the chemical makeup of the plaster, a binder is not required. Buon fresco is more stable because the pigment becomes part of the wall itself.

Domenico di Michelino's *Dante and the Divine Comedy* from 1465 (below) is a superb example of buon fresco. The colors and details are preserved in the dried plaster wall. Michelino shows the Italian author and poet Dante Aleghieri standing with a copy of the *Divine Comedy* open in his left hand, gesturing to the illustration of the story depicted around him. The artist shows us four different realms associated with the narrative: the mortal realm on the right depicting Florence, Italy; the heavenly realm indicated by the stepped mountain at the left center – you can see an angel greeting the saved souls as they enter from the base of the mountain; the realm of the damned to the left – with Satan surrounded by flames greeting them at the bottom of the painting; and the realm of the cosmos arching over the entire scene.



Domenico di Michelino, *Dante's Divine Comedy*, 1465, buon fresco, the Duomo, Florence, Italy

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Secco fresco refers to painting an image on the surface of a dry plaster wall. This medium requires a binder since the pigment is not mixed into the wet plaster. Egg tempera is the most common binder used for this purpose. It was common to use secco fresco over buon fresco murals in order to repair damage or make changes to the original.

Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of *The Last Supper* (below) was done using secco fresco.



Leonardo Da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, 1495 – 98, dry fresco on plaster. Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

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**4. Oil** paint is the most versatile of all the painting mediums. It uses pigment mixed with a binder of [linseed oil](#). Linseed oil can also be used as the vehicle, along with mineral spirits or turpentine. Oil painting was thought to have developed in Europe during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but recent [research](#) on murals found in Afghanistan caves show oil based paints were used there as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Some of the qualities of oil paint include a wide range of pigment choices, its ability to be thinned down and applied in almost transparent glazes as well as used straight from the tube (without the use of a vehicle), built up in thick layers called *impasto* (you can see this in many [works](#) by Vincent van Gogh). One drawback to the use of impasto is that over time the body of the paint can split, leaving networks of cracks along the thickest parts of the painting. Because oil paint dries slower than other mediums, it can

be blended on the support surface with meticulous detail. This extended working time also allows for adjustments and changes to be made without having to scrape off sections of dried paint.

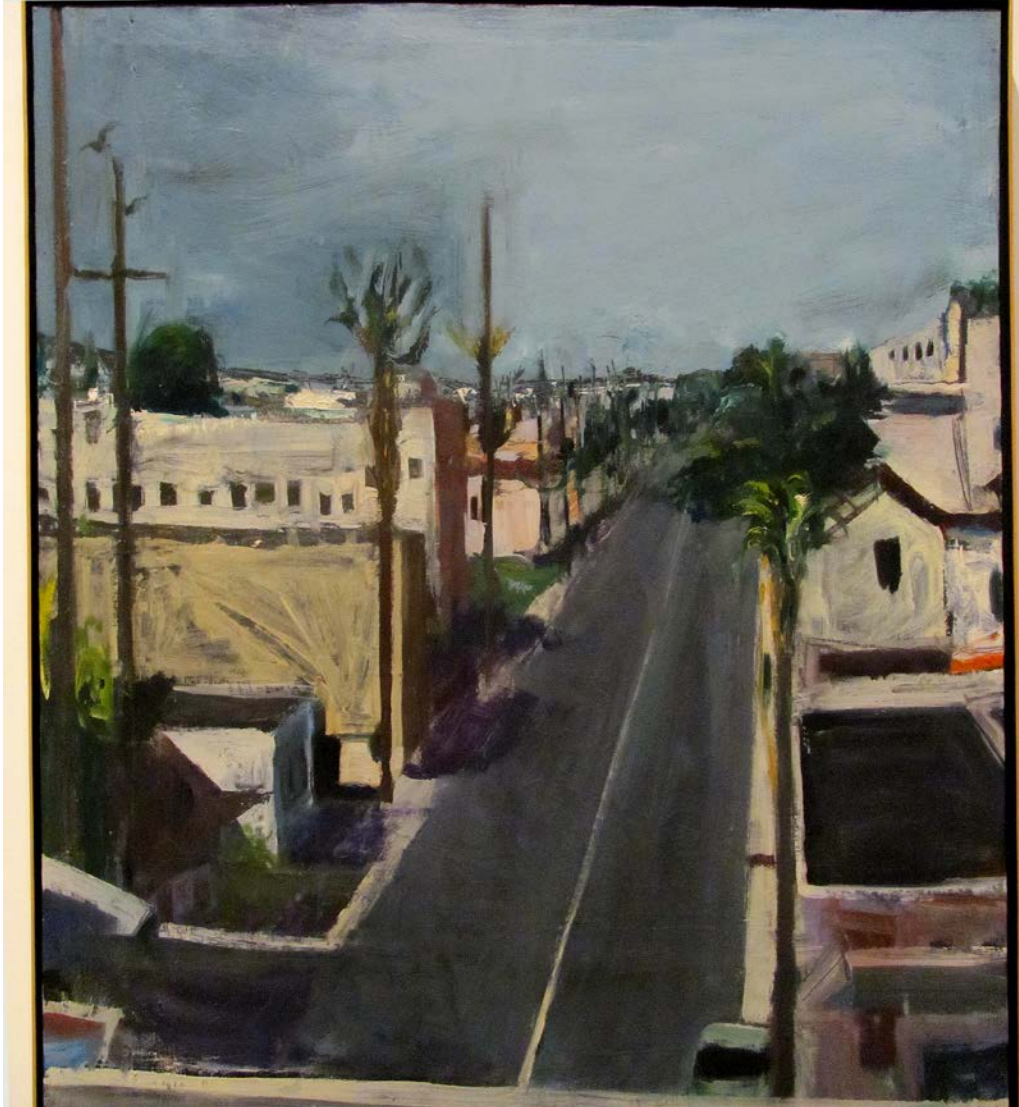
In [Jan Brueghel the Elder](#)'s still life oil painting you can see many of the qualities mentioned above. The richness of the paint itself is evident in both the resonant lights and inky dark colors of the work. The working of the paint allows for many different effects to be created, from the softness of the flower petals to the reflection on the vase and the many visual textures in between.

[Richard Diebenkorn](#)'s *Cityscape #1* from 1963 shows how the artist uses oil paint in a more fluid, expressive manner. He thins down the medium to obtain a quality and gesture that reflects the sunny, breezy atmosphere of a California morning. Diebenkorn used layers of oil paint, one over the other, to let the under painting show through and a flat, more geometric space that blurs the line between realism and abstraction.



Jan Brueghel the Elder, *Flowers in a Vase*, 1599. Oil on wood.  
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Germany.  
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Richard Diebenkom, *Cityscape #1*

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Georgia O'Keeffe's oil [paintings](#) show a range of handling between soft and austere to very detailed and evocative. You rarely see her brushstrokes, but she has a summary command of the medium of oil paint.

The abstract expressionist painters pushed the limits of what oil paint could do. Their focus was in the *act* of painting as much as it was about the subject matter. Indeed, for many of them there was no distinction between the two. The [work](#) of Willem de Kooning

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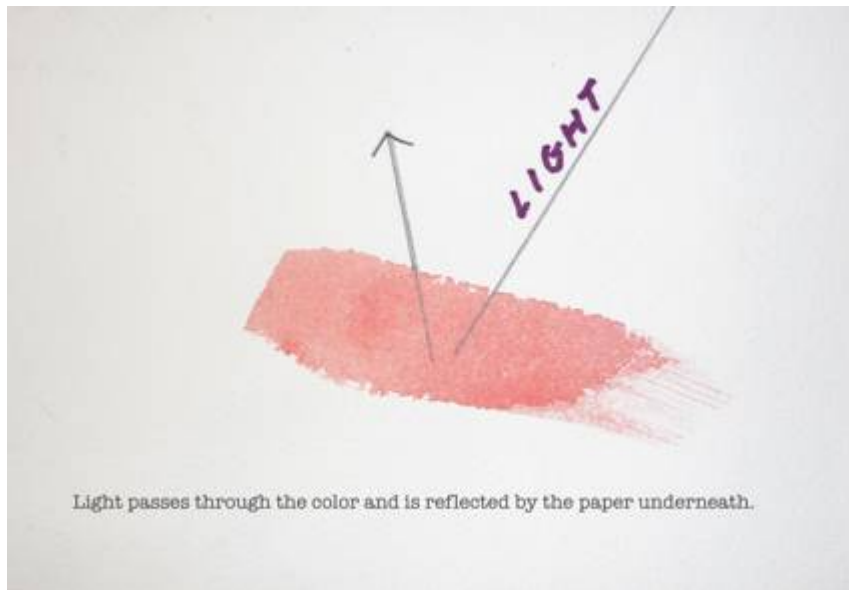


leaves a record of oil paint being brushed, dripped, scraped and wiped away all in a frenzy of creative activity. This idea stays contemporary in the paintings of [Celia Brown](#).

**5. Acrylic** paint was developed in the 1950's and became an alternative to oils. Pigment is suspended in an acrylic polymer emulsion binder and uses water as the vehicle. The acrylic polymer has characteristics like rubber or plastic. Acrylic paints offer the body, color resonance and durability of oils without the expense, mess and toxicity issues of using heavy solvents to mix them. One major difference is the relatively fast drying time of acrylics. They are water soluble, but once dry become impervious to water or other solvents. Moreover, acrylic paints adhere to many different surfaces and are extremely durable. Acrylic impastos will not crack or yellow over time.

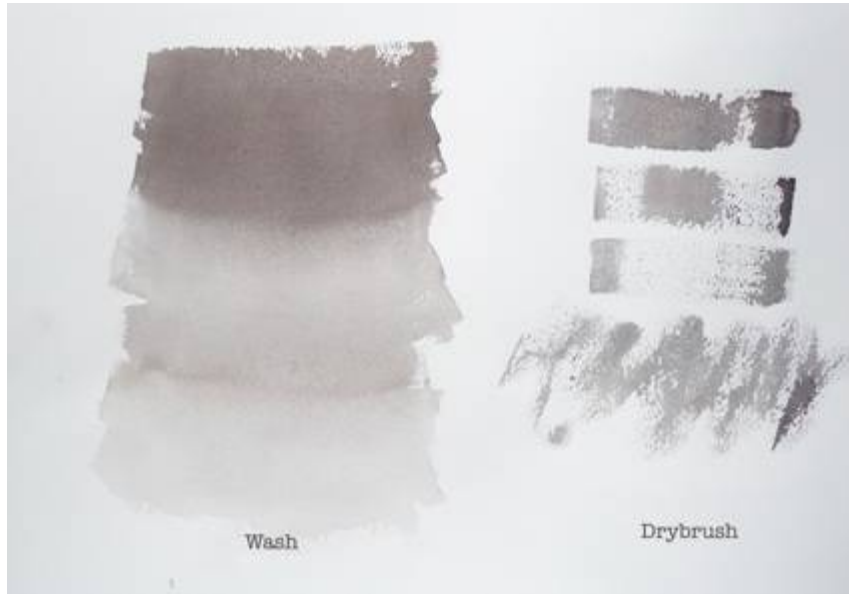
The American artist [Robert Colescott](#) (1925-2009) used acrylics on large-scale paintings. He uses thin layers of under painting, [scumbling](#), high contrast colors and luscious surfaces to bring out the full range of effects that acrylics offer.

**6. Watercolor** is the most sensitive of the painting mediums. It reacts to the lightest touch of the artist and can become an over worked mess in a moment. There are two kinds of watercolor media: **transparent** and **opaque**. Transparent watercolor operates in a reverse relationship to the other painting mediums. It is traditionally applied to a paper support, and relies on the whiteness of the paper to reflect light back through the applied color (see below), whereas opaque paints (including opaque watercolors) reflect light off the skin of the paint itself. Watercolor consists of pigment and a binder of gum arabic, a water-soluble compound made from the sap of the acacia tree. It dissolves easily in water.



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Watercolor paintings hold a sense of immediacy. The medium is extremely portable and excellent for small format paintings. The paper used for watercolor is generally of two types: hot pressed, which gives a smoother texture, and cold pressed, which results in a rougher texture. Transparent watercolor techniques include the use of **wash**; an area of color applied with a brush and diluted with water to let it flow across the paper. **Wet-in-wet** painting allows colors to flow and drift into each other, creating soft transitions between them. **Dry brush** painting uses little water and lets the brush run across the top ridges of the paper, resulting in a broken line of color and lots of visual texture.



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Examples of watercolor painting techniques: on the left, a wash. On the right, dry brush effects.

John Marin's [Brooklyn Bridge](#) (1912) shows extensive use of wash. He renders the massive bridge almost invisible except for the support towers at both sides of the painting. Even the Manhattan skyline becomes enveloped in the misty, abstract shapes created by washes of color.

*"Boy in a Red Vest"* by French painter Paul Cezanne builds form through nuanced colors and tones. The way the watercolor is laid onto the paper reflects a sensitivity and deliberation common in Cezanne's paintings.



Paul Cezanne, *Boy in a Red Vest*, c. 1890. Watercolor on paper.  
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The watercolors of Andrew Wyeth indicate the landscape with earth tones and localized color, often with dramatic areas of white paper left untouched. [Brandywine Valley](#) is a good example.

Opaque watercolor, also called ***gouache***, differs from transparent watercolor in that the particles are larger, the ratio of pigment to water is much higher, and an additional, inert, white pigment such as [chalk](#) is also present. Because of this, gouache paint gives stronger color than transparent watercolor, although it tends to dry to a slightly lighter tone than when it is applied. Gouache paint doesn't hold up well as impasto, tending to crack and fall away from the surface. It holds up well in thinner applications and often is used to cover large areas with color. Like transparent watercolor, dried gouache paint will become soluble again in water.

Jacob Lawrence's [paintings](#) use gouache to set the design of the composition. Large areas of color – including the complements blue and orange, dominate the figurative shapes in the foreground, while olive greens and neutral tones animate the background with smaller shapes depicting tools, benches and tables. The characteristics of gouache make it difficult to be used in areas of detail.

Gouache is a medium in traditional painting from other cultures too. [Zal Consults the Magi](#), part of an illuminated manuscript from 16<sup>th</sup> century Iran, uses bright colors of gouache along with ink, silver and gold to construct a vibrant composition full of intricate patterns and contrasts. Ink is used to create lyrical calligraphic passages at the top and bottom of the work.

**Other painting mediums** used by artists include the following:

**Enamel** paints form hard skins typically with a high-gloss finish. They use heavy solvents and are extremely durable.

**Powder coat** paints differ from conventional paints in that they do not require a solvent to keep the pigment and binder parts in suspension. They are applied to a surface as a powder then cured with heat to form a tough skin that is stronger than most other paints. Powder coats are applied mostly to metal surfaces.

**Epoxy** paints are [polymers](#), created mixing pigment with two different chemicals: a resin and a hardener. The chemical reaction between the two creates heat that bonds them together. Epoxy paints, like powder coats and enamel, are extremely durable in both indoor and outdoor conditions.

These industrial grade paints are used in sign painting, marine environments and aircraft painting.

### 3. Printmaking

**Printmaking** uses a transfer process to make multiples from an original image or template. The multiple images are printed in an **edition**, with each print signed and numbered by the artist. All printmaking mediums result in images reversed from the original. Print results depend on how the template (or **matrix**) is prepared. There are three basic techniques of printmaking: **Relief**, **Intaglio** and **Planar**. You can get an idea of how they differ from the cross-section images below, and view how each technique works from this [site](#) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Relief



Intaglio



Planar

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The black areas indicate the inked surface.

- **Relief Printing**

A **relief print**, such as a [woodcut](#) or linoleum cut, is created when the areas of the matrix (plate or block) that are to show the printed image are *on the original surface*; the parts of the matrix that are to be ink free having been cut away, or otherwise removed. The printed surface is in *relief* from the cut away sections of the plate. Once the area around the image is cut away, the surface of the plate is rolled up with ink. Paper is laid over the matrix, and both are run through a press, transferring the ink from the surface of the matrix to the paper. The nature of the relief process doesn't allow for lots of detail, but does result in graphic images with strong contrasts. Carl Eugene Keel's "Bar" shows the effects of a woodcut printed in black ink.



Carl Eugene Keel, *Bar*, 2006. Woodcut print on paper.

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[Block printing](#) developed in China hundreds of years ago and was common throughout East Asia. The Japanese woodblock print below shows dynamic effects of implied motion and the contrasts created using only one color and black. [Ukiyo-e](#) or “floating world” prints became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even influencing European artists during the Industrial Revolution.

Relief printmakers can use a separate block or matrix for each color printed or, in **reduction prints** a single block is used, cutting away areas of color as the print develops. This method can result in a print with many colors.



Christopher Gildow, *Boathouse*, 2007, from the *Stillaguamish Series*. Reduction woodcut print.

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- **Intaglio Printing**

**Intaglio** prints such as etchings, are made by incising channels into a copper or metal plate with a sharp instrument called a **burin** to create the image, inking the entire plate, then wiping the ink from the surface of the plate, leaving ink only in the incised

channels **below** the surface. Paper is laid over the plate and put through a press under high pressure, forcing the ink to be transferred to the paper.

Examples of the intaglio process include etching and **dry point**. In dry point, the artist creates an image by scratching the burin directly into a metal plate (usually copper) before inking and printing. Today artists also use plexi-glass, a hard clear plastic, as plates. Characteristically these prints have strong line quality and exhibit a slightly blurred edge to the line as the result of burrs created in the process of incising the plate, similar to clumps of soil laid to the edge of a furrowed trench. A fine example of dry point is seen in Rembrandt's [Clump of Trees with a Vista](#). The velvety darks are created by the effect of the burred-edged lines.

- **Etched Printing**

**Etching** begins by first applying a protective wax-based coating to a thin metal plate. The artist then scratches an image with a burin through the protective coating into the surface of the metal. The plate is then submersed in a strong acid bath, etching the exposed lines. The plate is removed from the acid and the protective coating is removed from the plate. Now the bare plate is inked, wiped and printed. The image is created from the ink in the etched channels. The amount of time a plate is kept in the acid bath determines the quality of tones in the resulting print: the longer it is etched the darker the tones will be. 'Correccion' by the Spanish master Francisco Goya shows the clear linear quality etching can produce. The acid bath removes any burrs created by the initial dry point work, leaving details and value contrasts consistent with the amount of lines and the distance between them. Goya presents a fantastic image of people, animals and strange winged creatures. His work often involved biting social commentary. 'Correccion' is a contrast between the pious and the absurd.



Francisco Goya, *Correccion*, 1799. Etching on paper.  
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There are many different techniques associated with intaglio, including [aquatint](#), scraping and burnishing.

- **Planar Printing**

**Planar** prints like [monoprints](#) are created on the *surface* of the matrix without any cutting or incising. In this technique the surface of the matrix (usually a thin metal plate or Plexiglass) is completely covered with ink, then areas are partially removed by wiping, scratching away or otherwise removed to form the image. Paper is laid over the matrix, then run through a press to transfer the image to the paper. Monoprints

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(also *monotypes*) are the simplest and painterly of the printing mediums. By definition monotypes and monoprints cannot be reproduced in editions. [Kathryn Trigg's](#) monotypes show how close this print medium is related to painting and drawing.

**Lithography** is another example of planar printmaking, developed in Germany in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. “Litho” means “stone” and “graph” means “to draw”. The traditional matrix for lithography is the smooth surface of a limestone block.



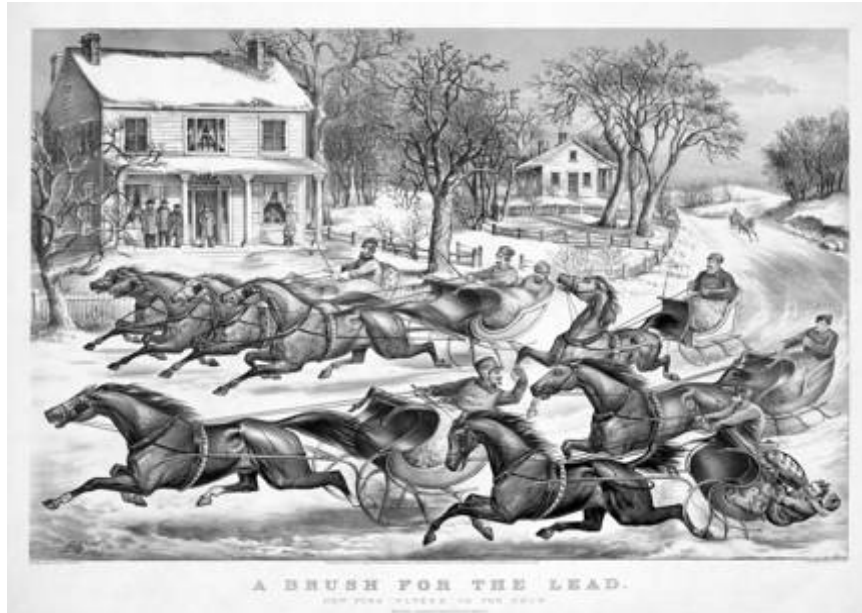
Lithographic stone is on the left with the negative image. Printed positive image is on the right. Image by Chris73.

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While this matrix is still used extensively, thin zinc plates have also been introduced to the medium. They eliminate the bulk and weight of the limestone block but provide the same surface texture and characteristics. The lithographic process is based on the fact that grease repels water. In traditional lithography, an image is created on the surface of the stone or plate using grease pencils or wax crayons or a grease-based liquid medium called [tusche](#). The finished image is covered in a thin layer of gum arabic that includes a weak solution of nitric acid as an etching agent. The resulting chemical reaction divides the surface into two areas: the positive areas containing the image and that will repel water, and the negative areas surrounding the image that will be water receptive. In printing a lithograph, the gum arabic film is removed and the stone or metal surface is kept moist with water so when it's rolled up with an oil based ink the ink adheres to the positive (image) areas but not to the negative (wet) areas.

Because of the mediums used to create the imagery, lithographic images show characteristics much like drawings or paintings. In “*A Brush for the Lead*” by [Currier And](#)

[Ives](#) (below), a full range of shading and more linear details of description combine to illustrate a winter's race down the town's main road.



Currier and Ives, *A Brush for the Lead; New York Flyers on the Snow*, 1867. Lithograph Library of Congress.

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**Serigraphy**, also known as **Screen-printing**, is a third type of planar printing medium. Screen-printing is a printing technique that uses a woven mesh to support an ink-blocking [stencil](#). The attached stencil forms open areas of mesh that transfer ink or other printable materials that can be pressed through the mesh as a sharp-edged image onto a substrate such as paper or fabric. A roller or squeegee is moved across the screen stencil, forcing or pumping ink past the threads of the woven mesh in the open areas. The image below shows how a stencil's positive (image) areas are isolated from the negative (non-image) areas.



TeeshirtCopyleft cadre

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In serigraphy, each color needs a separate stencil. You can watch how this process develops in the accompanying [video](#). Screen printing is an efficient way to print posters, announcements and other kinds of popular culture images. [Andy Warhol](#)'s silk screens use images and iconography from popular culture.

#### **4. Collage**

**Collage** is a medium that uses found objects or images such as newspaper or other printed material, illustrations, photographs, even string or fabric, to create images. It also refers to works of art (paintings, drawings and prints) that include pieces of collage within them. Collage was made popular in western art history by Pablo Picasso and the [cubists](#). The German artist Kurt Schwitters used collage as the dominant formal element in his works from the 1930's. His work [Opened by Customs](#) is an excellent example of the importance of collage to the modern art movement in Europe before World War Two.

Artist Romare Bearden used collage to comment on urban life and the black experience in America. His [Patchwork Quilt](#) presents us with a figure in profile reminiscent of [Egyptian painting](#). The starkness of the black figure surrounded by a collage of patterned fabric and dark background color creates a shallow space and dynamic composition.

The Japanese American artist Paul Horiuchi began as a painter but by mid career used collage almost exclusively. [Mesa](#) from 1960 is an abstract rendition of the geologic feature: an isolated hill with steeply sloping sides and a flat top (compare it to Joseph Goldberg's "*Spring Mesa*" above in the *encaustic* painting section). Horiuchi's art is a successful blending of the formal elements of cubist ideas with the oriental aesthetic of his Japanese heritage. His most ambitious piece is the [Seattle Mural](#), a huge glass mosaic commissioned for the site of the 1962 World's Fair. Though not collage, this immense work mimics the artist's collage technique in its shapes and composition.



Paul Horiuchi, *Seattle Mural*, 1962. Glass mosaic.

The Seattle Center.

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## **Conclusion**

Each individual two-dimensional medium has an extensive range of uses. Taken together their breadth is wide and the visual, textural and emotional effects they give to works of art are extremely varied as you can see in the many examples used throughout this module. Most of us have had some exposure to drawing and painting, maybe even printmaking and collage. They are tools artists use to express themselves, their thoughts and ideas. If your curiosity is stirred by the exposure you've had here, sign up for a studio art course. You'll have the opportunity to learn additional techniques and skills in how to use them to express your own creative ideas.