



Ponte Vecchio

Issued in 1990

Etching

Plate Size: 11-3/4 x 12-3/4 ins. Paper
Size: 21-1/4 x 22-1/4 ins.

Edition: 99 and 10 artist's proofs

Regular Edition: \$950

Artist Proof: Contact for Information

*Framing not included in price.

Pat and Her Art - Etchings

Each etching in an edition is an original print because it is pulled directly from the plate on which Pat has created the image and comes in no other form. In this respect, etchings differ from offset reproductions for which the original image is created in a different medium such as watercolor or oil painting. Because, in the case of the offset, the image starts in one form and ends in another, it is termed a "reproduction."

Pat's involvement in the creation of etchings has been described as a "labor of love." Each etching requires an enormous amount of time and energy, and she is able to produce only a limited number of editions each year.

Pat uses many of the same techniques employed by the sixteenth and seventeenth century masters, such as Rembrandt and Goya. First, she selects a metal plate, usually steel but on occasion copper, which is cut for her to the size of the image she intends to print. The plate is then thoroughly cleaned and polished so its surface is smooth and without blemishes. Next, it is coated with an acid resistant substance to create what is called the "ground."

Using a fine-pointed steel needle, Pat draws the outline of her image onto the plate. The needle scribes through the ground to lay bare the steel beneath. When she has completed her initial drawing, the plate is placed in a bath of acid. The ground protects the plate from the acid; but, where the needle has drawn, the acid eats into the metal, creating an etched line which subsequently carries the printer's ink. The plate may be immersed into the acid a number of times during this process. When it is first removed, those lines which Pat wishes to be the finest lines will be covered with a new application of the ground. When the plate next goes into the acid bath, these areas will be protected from further "biting." Following this method, she is able to vary the depth and thickness of the lines throughout the plate.

When all the lines are bitten to the correct depth, Pat wipes the ground off the complete surface of the plate, polishing its surface to make certain that it is totally clean. Next, she applies the ink, pushing it into the bitten lines. When satisfied that all the lines are filled with the ink, she again polishes the plate's surface so that no ink exists outside of her drawn image.

The procedures described so far relate to the linear areas of the image. We now need to address how the multiple colors and tonal effects are achieved. For these she uses a second plate, cut to the exact size of the first. To this plate she applies what is called aquatint. She covers the area of the plate where she wishes to apply color with a powdered rosin. She then heats the plate so that the rosin crystals adhere to its surface. Now, when she puts the plate into the acid, the acid eats between the rosin crystals, creating a mass of small inundations which are called "bitten areas." These will subsequently hold the inks. The depth of these areas and, therefore, the amount of ink they will hold will, again, depend on the time they are exposed to the acid and will also determine the tone of color and the texture of the print. Where necessary, she is able to reduce the intensity of tone and texture by burnishing the bitten surface.

When Pat has prepared both plates to her satisfaction, she applies the inks. On the aquatint plate, she applies the different colors, bleeding and blending them together to achieve gradation of color.

It is now time to print the first proofs of the image. Pat begins by laying the aquatint plate on the bed of the printing press and placing over it a sheet of dampened cotton paper. The plate and paper pass through the cylinders of the press, forcing the moist paper down into the etched areas which hold the ink. The ink is thereby transferred onto the paper so that when the paper is removed from the plate, it carries the areas of color and texture.

Now, Pat replaces the aquatint plate with the plate containing her drawn lines, placing it in exactly the same position on the press bed. When the plate and paper pass through the press, the etched black lines become superimposed on the areas of color. For each individual print, both plates have to be re-inked before printing. Again, this is done by hand and, inevitably, no two prints turn out exactly the same. This further adds to the original character of each etching print.

This describes what is involved in Pat's creation of each etching. There are additional techniques and variations that she also uses in certain circumstances; but, if you understand the above, you know the essentials of her technique. One final note: etching editions are kept small because the etched surfaces of the plates deteriorate after a certain number of printings due to the immense pressure needed in printing. Copper, being a softer metal than steel, is less durable, which is why Pat usually works on steel.

Excerpt from ~ <http://pbuckleymoss.com/etchings.html>

Click link for photos of Pat at work and more information about Pat's works.