**Common Printmaking Terms**

Designs for printmaking are created on surfaces that are commonly called a **plate** or **block** and in lithography, a **stone**. Some artworks require multiple plates, blocks, or stones to print a single image.

A **proof** is any printing of an image from a printing surface.

A **state** is each printing of a new version of an image from the same printing surface. After making the first proof of an image, the artist may decide to make changes to it and print a new version. These are usually numbered in sequence: “First state,” “Second state,” etc.

A **lithograph** is created by drawing an image onto a printing surface, often a block of limestone or a metal plate, using a greasy crayon or liquid called **tusche**. When ink is applied, it is absorbed by the greasy areas. A sheet of paper is then placed on the inked printing surface and run through a press.

A **woodcut** is created by drawing a design on a block of wood and then cutting away everything that is not part of the design. This leaves a raised, or **relief**, image that is then inked and printed.

An **etching** is created by covering a plate (usually metal) with an acid-resistant coating, called the **ground**, and drawing a design through it. The plate is then dipped in acid, which bites into the exposed lines and etches the design into the plate. Ink is forced into the etched lines and the plate is covered with a sheet of dampened paper before it is run through a press.

**Aquatint** is a type of ground, or coating, used on printmaking plates to achieve a broad range of tonal values, often resembling watercolor or wash drawings. When plates are exposed to acid, small particles in the aquatint resist the acid creating a series of fine marks around them that hold ink.

A **drypoint** is created by scratching lines directly into a metal plate with a sharp steel or diamond point. This raises a ragged ridge of metal along the groove, called the **burr**, which holds some ink and prints as a soft, dark accent to the sharper lines.