

Lynn Rosskamp

Print Witchery
Seattle, WA

lynn@printwitchery.com

www.printwitchery.com

IG: @lynnprints



I'm a Seattle based printmaker and illustrator. I grew up in Appalachia, in a family of veterinarians and gardeners, folks who appreciate making things with their hands, having soil under their fingernails and respecting the natural world and our fellow inhabitants, be they furry, feathered or finned. I've dabbled in many areas of creativity and was a hatmaker for a number of years at Pike Place Market.

In 2015, through my volunteer work as a docent at the Frye Art Museum, I was introduced to the printmaking department of Pratt Fine Arts Center and immediately knew I had to try etching. After my first few class sessions, I was hooked and have not stopped scratching tiny lines into fussily prepared copper sheets ever since. I'm honored and surprised to find myself now teaching workshops in etching and chine collé at the same institution that taught me the very special printmaking technique I use today.

I have shown in group shows around Seattle, including at Davidson Gallery and had two solo shows at the Lan Su Chinese Classical Garden in Portland. I also regularly sell my prints at art fairs around the region such as Renegade Craft, Best of the Northwest, Wild Arts and others. I can currently be found showing new work and old favorites at Sugarwall Gallery, part of the Greenwood Art Collective. Our gallery is open every second Friday for Artwalk if you happen to be in the neighborhood.

Regarding the jackrabbit etching that has been included in this exhibit at BIMA, it's mostly line etching on copper with some spit bite aquatint in the background. For the non-printmakers, the way etchings are made is thus: take a sheet of copper, coat it with a waxy ground, then use a metal stylus to draw into the coating, scraping it away to reveal the copper underneath. It's essentially like drawing on paper or scratchboard. Once the lines are scratched on, the plate is then submerged in a bath of acid, ferric chloride to be exact, that eats fine channels into the exposed areas of copper which can then hold ink for printing.



The plate gets taken out of the acid, the ground is cleaned off it and it's ready for the next stage: inking using oil based etching ink that looks like thick colorful shortening. The ink is carded onto the plate in a thin layer then rubbed into the tiny lines and grooves using special cloth called tarlatan that resembles stiffened cheesecloth.

Once the ink has been mashed into the grooves and mostly wiped away from the flat portions of the plate, it gets a final polish using either phone book paper (a rare commodity these days!) or with powdered chalk and the side of the printer's hand. Then the plate is laid on the bed of an etching press and dampened cotton rag paper is placed atop the plate. Three heavy felt blankets are laid across it, tucking it all in cozily, and the crank on the press is manually turned, propelling the bed underneath a heavy metal roller in the center. The roller squashes the plate against the soft, malleable fibers of the paper, which absorbs

each tiny fine line's payload of ink, transferring the image from plate to paper. The print is placed on a rack to dry and then it is ready to be framed and enjoyed.

This is a technique whose technology remains mostly unchanged since the days of Rembrandt. I was lucky enough to get to see a recreation of his etching workshop and printing press at Rembrandt House in Amsterdam and, yep, it's pretty much just like the one in my basement (whose name is Baby), except it's made of wood and mine of metal and plastic. I admit to a little bit of a thrill at

reaching across through time with an art practice that has changed little from its inception hundreds of years ago.

As to the subject of the etching, I seem to find myself making hares and rabbits a lot lately. Rabbits are lovely and soft and have gentle faces whereas the family of hares, of which jackrabbits are members, look like they've seen some things in their time on earth. Sinewy and wild, with large rolling eyes that have just a little gleam of madness in them like Wonderland's march hare. They've got an interesting air of danger about them and look like they have some secret knowledge. I dig them. The photo I used as a reference for this one was taken from an old mid century encyclopedia. I was also thinking about two of my printmaking idol's rabbit images when I made it: Albrecht Durer's famous ink drawing and Beth van Hoesen's "Sally."

