



V A N W E Y E N B E R G H

Original or print?

Usually a screen made of dots can be seen through a magnifying glass with grain traces like sand on the surface. In addition, very small spots of ink or smudges can be detected on the surface whereas some lines are so thin that no stroke of a pen could make them. Many prints bear the mark of the press all along their edges and seem to form a hollow surface like a kind of intaglio engraving. Not all engravings, like wood cuts and etchings, have a hollow surface but one can see clearly printed lines on the surface or even feel them when caressing an etching. There have been also prints heightened with watercolors which were quite deceiving and really looking like hand-made works where printed dots could not be detected. Offset and serigraphic prints are usually totally flat. Serigraphic works by Andy Warhol were in fact photomechanical processes whereby an image was reproduced in a limited edition on a silk screen with the addition of acrylic colors of different tones which may look like paintings in the eyes of non-professionals.

Sheets of paper could be thick or thin with different grains. Many forgers have used old sheets to produce works so as to make believe they had been made during previous centuries.

The signature of a painter is not a guarantee that the work being examined was produced by him. Many forged signatures have been added on oil works, drawings or watercolors. The same objection applies for prints. For example, the printed signature of Salvador Dali was often added on white sheets of paper even before they went to the lithographer's studio or worse, such signature or even a forged one, was added to lithographs. There were also some so-called posthumous signatures added on certain prints (Magritte for example, by his wife) by the heirs of many artists.

Techniques

There have been different working techniques: oil, tempera (a medium containing egg), acrylic mixtures, watercolors, gouache, crayon, black or red chalk, plumbago, monotypes and prints of all kinds used by artists.

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