

station gallery

otis tamasauskas: lithography

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INFORMATION TO SPARK THINKING ABOUT ART



A traditional lithography press

facts:

Lithography was discovered in 1798 by Alois Senefelder of Munich who used a porous Bavarian limestone for his plate.

A new lithography press costs between \$15,000 and \$30,000. Traditional presses like the one in the photo are much harder to find and cost around \$5,000. Station Gallery owns one litho press.

feature work from our Permanent Collection

Lithuanian by heritage but born in Terscheneuth, Germany, Otis Tamasauskas immigrated to Niagara Falls, Ontario with his family at the age of five in 1952. By bringing together a wide variety of imagery and found objects in order to explore interior landscapes and create vibrant abstract compositions, Otis reinforces the relationship between art and the real world. Otis relies heavily on experimentation and collage to create deeply rich, textural surfaces.

“there is an intimacy with paper which allows an artist to communicate a brief passage or a fleeting idea which is too fragile to convey with a big canvas or Masonite or any other structural material”.

Otis Tamasauskas

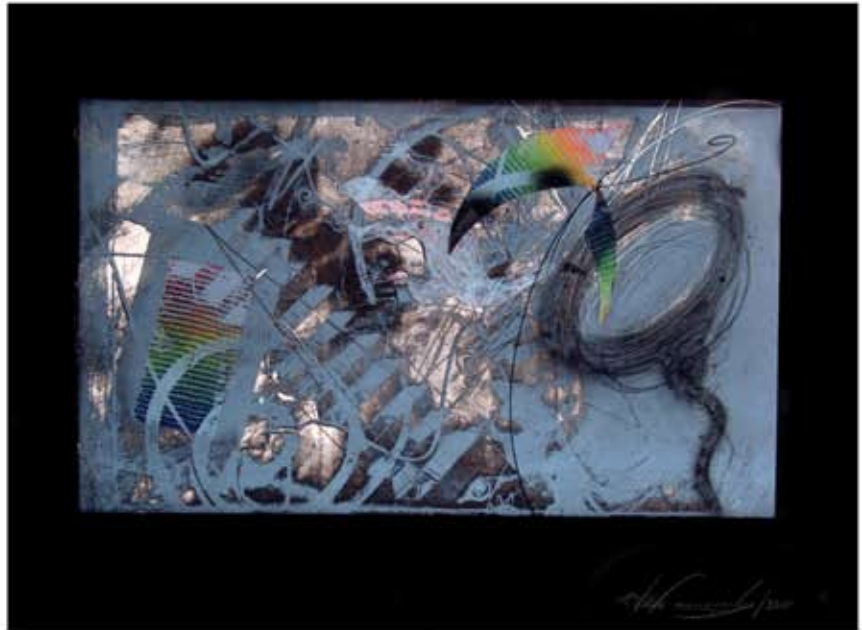
Process: What is Lithography?

From the Greek *lithos* meaning stone and *graphia* meaning drawing, Lithography is just that with a couple of twists along the way. This type of printmaking is planographic, meaning the surface of the matrix, usually an incredibly flat and smooth slab of limestone, is not carved into or cut away. The lithographer draws on the surface of the stone using waxy drawing materials, and then treats the surface with an acidic mixture, “etching” the drawing into the stone’s surface. This acidic mixture causes the bare parts of the stone to attract water, while the drawn image of the stone repels water. To print the image, the artist washes the drawing material off of the stone, dampens it, and rolls it up with ink, which sticks to the drawn areas of the stone. Paper is laid over the image, and the two are rolled through a printing press, where pressure transfers the ink onto the paper, creating a print.

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feature work

The work of Otis Tamasauskas is somewhat like a magician's trick. If one wished, they could break it apart, and closely analyse the procedures that make up the end product. Yet that would ruin the magic, the indescribable awe that is inspired by allowing the work to unfold itself. *Salamander's Walk, Quebec Series* – acquired by Station Gallery in 1985 – combines recognizable imagery with blasts of vibrant lithographic colour to produce a work that does not yield all its secrets at first glance, its image materializing through the masterful technical handling and bold expression of the artist.



Salamander's Walk, Quebec Series
1985, Lithograph
22 in x 30 in

curriculum questions

Where did your eye start in viewing this print?

Can you find an example in the print of movement from a large to a small shape?

Can you identify 3 different "paths" in the print? What kind of movement is there, fast, slow, energetic, tired?

questions to analyse

What makes this artwork different from other artwork you have seen?

How would you change this artwork?

What do you think is the most important part of this artwork?

curriculum link

Grade 8, Principle of Design Focus : Movement (from The Ontario Curriculum for The Arts 2009)

Movement: actual lines to lead the viewer's eye (e.g., solid lines, dotted lines); subtle or implied "paths" using shape, value, and/or colour (e.g., an invisible path created by leading the eye from large shapes to small shapes, from shapes in dark colours to shapes in lighter colours, from familiar shapes to unfamiliar shapes, from colour to no colour).