

❖ The art of Etching ❖

Printmaking is an old artistic discipline practiced throughout the history of art by many brilliant artists like Albrech Dürer, Rembrandt, Callot, Goya, Hogarth and William Blake. In printmaking, artists create images on a rigid surface called a matrix—typically made of metal, wood, linoleum, or stone. This surface is carved or treated to hold ink, which is then transferred under pressure onto paper or fabric to create the final print. The prints obtained from the matrix each represents an original and unique piece.

In etching, a well polished metal matrix is first completely protected with a varnish composed of Judean bitumen and beeswax. The artist uses a sharp tool to draw the desired image in the dry varnish, exposing the metal underneath. The metal plate is then placed in an acid bath. The acid "bites" into the metal only where the lines have been drawn, creating recessed grooves. After removing the remaining varnish with a solvent, ink is spread across the entire plate and then wiped off the surface. The ink remains only in the etched grooves. A damp piece of paper is placed over the plate. Both are run through a high-pressure printing press, which forces the paper into the grooves to pick up the ink.

❖ Leonardo Cuervo's etching technique ❖

The etching prints presented to be shown in The Independent Gallery's exhibit "Oratoria" originate from hand-made drawings on zinc plates. Each image is meticulously drawn in the varnish with a fine-tip needle. To create various depths of light and shadow, Cuervo repeatedly reapplies varnish, redraws specific areas, and etches the plate in acid for precise lengths of time. This process is repeated as needed until the state proof print reveals the final image intended by Cuervo.

Each of the pieces in this exhibit was manually printed by Cuervo in his own etching press with Cranfield Caligo Brown-Black Ink on Rives BFK paper 270 gsm. Each print is numbered and signed by the artist.