

Line (2000)

NOTES:

1. Richard Tuttle, "A Connoisseurship of Metaphor," *Art Journal* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2011), artist's project, p. 144.
2. *À la poupée* is a method of inking intaglio prints in which two or more inks of different colors are selectively applied to different parts of a single copperplate. The inked plate is then printed in a single pass through the press. The method takes its name from the *poupée* (doll), the small ball-shaped wad of fabric that is used to ink the plate.
3. *Chine-collé* (from French *chine* = tissue, and *collé*, meaning glued or pasted) is a technique, in which the image is transferred to a surface that is bonded to a heavier support in the printing process. One purpose is to allow the printmaker to print on a much more delicate surface, such as Japanese paper or linen, which pulls finer details off the plate.
4. Richard Tuttle, "A Connoisseurship of Metaphor," *Art Journal* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2011), artist's project, p. 105.
5. Richard Tuttle, interview, "Richard Tuttle: Art and Life," *Art21*, November 2011, <http://www.art21.org/texts/richard-tuttle/interview-richard-tuttle-art-and-life> (retrieved 12/16/2013). Originally published on *PBS.org* in September 2005.

IMAGE CREDITS:

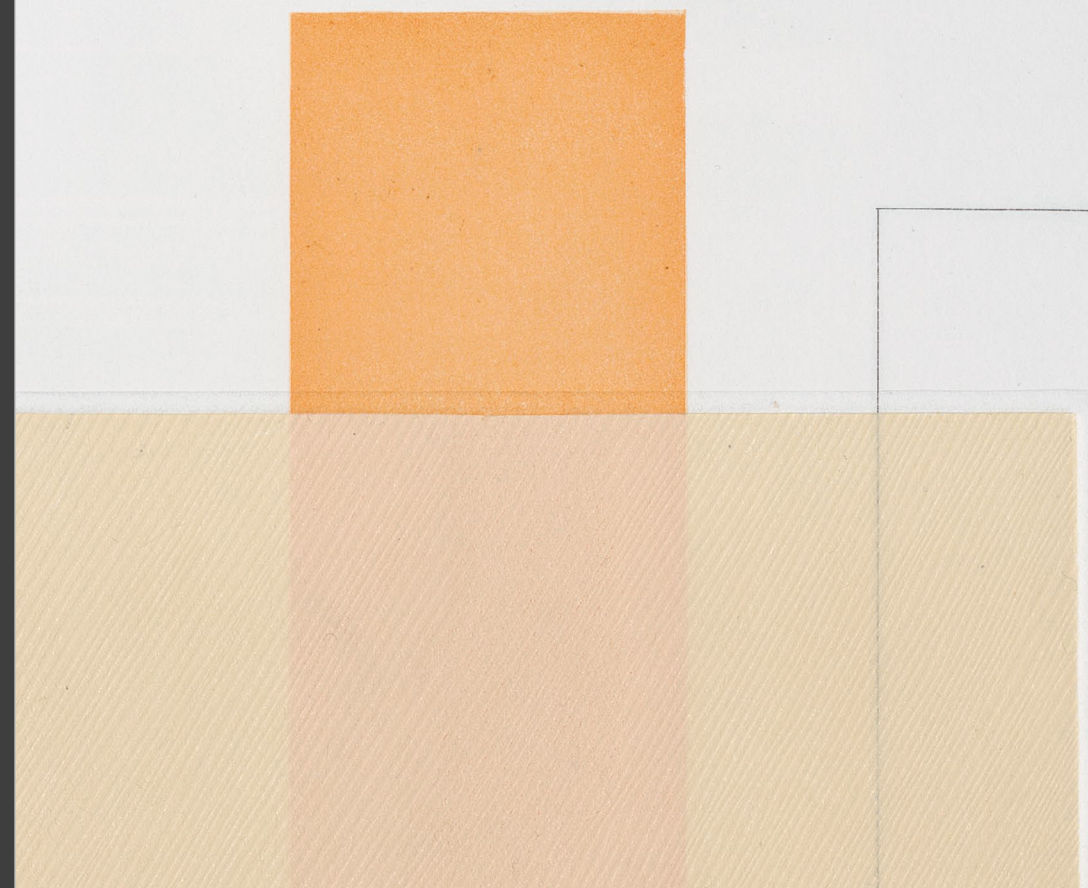
- Cover:** Detail of *plate no. 12* from the suite *Line* (2000). 13 hard-ground etchings with woodblock, aquatint, and *chine collé*, printed in colors, with copperplate embossing on Hahnemühle 300 gsm paper. Sheet: 13 1/8 x 13 1/8 inches (33.3 x 33.3 cm). Edition of 25. Published by Brooke Alexander Editions, New York.
- Back:** *Line* (2000).
- Interior:**
1. *Print* (1976). Screenprint on two sheets of Royal Watercolour Society handmade paper. Sheet (approximately): 31 1/4 x 21 1/2 inches (79.3 x 54.6 cm). Edition of 31. Published by Brooke Alexander Editions, New York.
 2. From left: *GREEN, no. 7 (absence)*, *GREEN, no. 1 (dreams)*, *GREEN, no. 3 (happy)*, *GREEN, no. 5 (not dropping)* from the portfolio *Purple* (2001). Seven aquatints printed in colors on Somerset textured soft white paper. Sheet: 21 3/8 x 20 5/8 inches (54.3 x 52.3 cm). Edition of 15. Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco.
 3. *Plate no. 3* from the suite *The Edge* (1998). 13 engravings inked *à la poupée*, printed in colors with copperplate embossing on Hahnemühle 300 gsm paper. Sheet: 8 x 8 inches (20.3 x 20.3 cm). Edition of 25. Published by Brooke Alexander Editions, New York.
 4. *Label no. 12* from the series *Cloth* (2002–2005). 16 etchings with aquatint, spit bite, sugar lift, soft-ground etching, drypoint, and *fabric collé*, printed in colors on Hahnemühle 300 gsm paper. Sheet: 16 x 16 inches (40.6 x 40.6 cm). Edition of 25. Published by Brooke Alexander Editions, New York.
 5. *WPEW VI* (2012) from the series *When Pressure Exceeds Weight* (2012–2013). Eleven mixed-media works with drypoint, inked *à la poupée*, printed in color; with pigmented pulp, string embossing, colored snaplines and finger-painted pigment additions on handmade paper. Edition sizes vary. Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, Bay Shore, New York.

Richard Tuttle: A Print Retrospective, curated by Christina von Rotenhan, is organized by the Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, Bowdoin College Museum of Art: original founding institution of the exhibition. ©2016 Oklahoma State University Museum of Art. Exhibitions and programs at the Oklahoma State University Museum of Art are sponsored by OSUMA Founding Patrons, OSU/A&M Board of Regents, Friends of the Museum, and the Oklahoma Arts Council.



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RICHARD TUTTLE: A PRINT RETROSPECTIVE



February 8 – May 7, 2016

PRINT AWARENESS



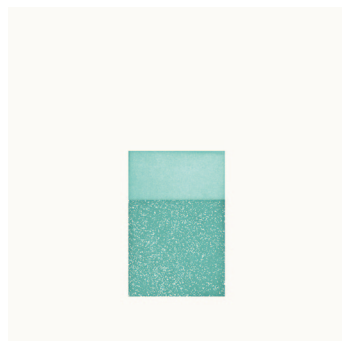
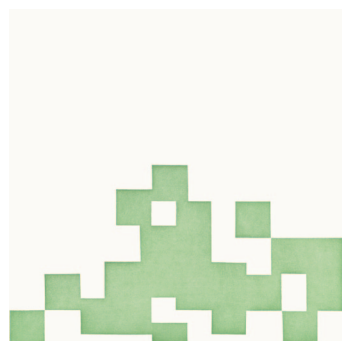
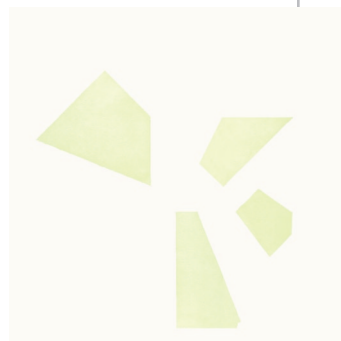
Print (1976)

SINCE THE 1960S...

Richard Tuttle (b. 1941, Rahway, NJ) has created poetic, often ephemeral works that challenge us to reconsider the entangled relationship between what we see and what we understand. Composed from materials often so modest as to be generally unnoticed, and arranged with a casual touch, Tuttle's works only gradually unfold their tensions between material presence and immaterial dimensions, between the visible and the invisible.

Prints have been at the core of Tuttle's practice since the early 1970s. In collaboration with renowned printers and publishers, he has created a diverse printed oeuvre that explores the transitional and allusive nature of printmaking. Tuttle is fascinated by how the transfer process of printmaking can render visible not only the designs recorded on a printing matrix, but also can bring "invisible" information to the surface such as the hidden properties of materials or the actions involved in the printmaking process. These aspects of material and process all leave physical traces of their existence in a print and imbue the medium with an almost mystical ability to account for the invisible. "In important ways," Tuttle explains, "consciousness and print awareness are simultaneous, and perhaps even synonymous."¹

As the first survey of his prints featuring works from more than four decades, *Richard Tuttle: A Print Retrospective* illuminates four principle themes through which Tuttle has explored the unique possibilities that printmaking offers.



From left: GREEN, no. 7 (absence), GREEN, no. 1 (dreams), GREEN, no. 3 (happy), GREEN, no. 5 (not dropping) from the portfolio *Purple* (2001)

SURFACE

Printing means transferring information from one surface to another. It is one of the oddities of printmaking that the image inscribed on a matrix can only materialize when it is impressed onto a different material, usually paper. But does the transferred image simply rest on the surface of the paper, or is it embedded in the paper? Where is the picture plane in a print? *Print* (1976), one of Tuttle's early printed works, introduces Tuttle's fascination with the difficulties of defining the picture plane in a printed image. In this work, a black silk-screened bar stretches across two sheets of handmade paper. Only on closer inspection does it reveal a crack—an interruption in the printing because of the uneven edges of the paper, which makes the gap between the two sheets perceivable. The print communicates both connection and rupture. *The Edge* (1998) marks the beginning of a series of works investigating further complications related to issues of the edge in intaglio printing. The usually unnoticed indentation that a plate leaves when run through the press is a unique aspect of the intaglio process. In this series, this embossed edge becomes a subtle "frame" for a joyful and complex interplay of edges and their subtle transgressions. Tuttle's embossments confuse and conflate the edge of the physical paper with that of the plate. In *Line* (2000), not only are printed and embossed lines played against one another, but traces of other surfaces printed in relief and intaglio on the paper's surface become visible. Different materials used for printing, such as veneers, leave traces of a variety of grains and embossments. Here, Tuttle also reverses the "over" and "under" structure of the print: "surfaces" are revealed not as resting on top of the image, but rather as being an embedded impression of the surface of the printing matrix itself.

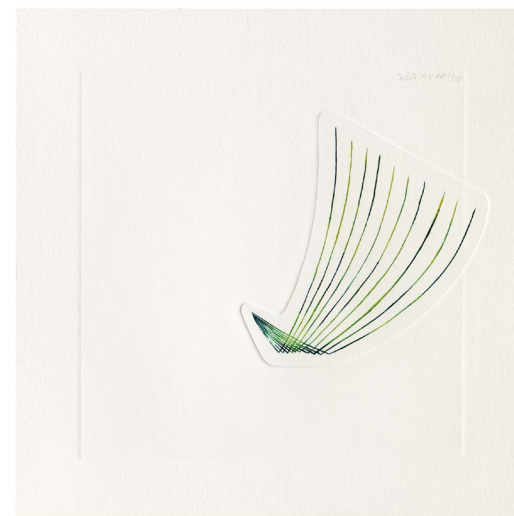


Plate no. 3 from the suite *The Edge* (1998)

COLOR

Printmaking also offers particular insights into the nature of color, since colors can be applied and produced in many different ways in the printmaking process. *The Edge* (1998), a series of 13 engravings, was printed with the inking technique *à la poupée* inspired by historical botanical prints Tuttle had seen in a printer's studio.² This technique works by applying two colors by hand with a pipette before the matrix is printed. With this technique, Tuttle also introduces a small amount of chance: it is unclear to which degree the two colors will mix and interfere with one another in the printing process. In *Purple* (2001) Tuttle refers to the significance of the color purple for the color green. "All greens have used purple in smallish, invisible amounts," he explains on the title page of the portfolio. In each print a tiny amount of purple (*violet solide*) was added to the ink. The different greens of each print were created thereby through the continuous process of printing from a single plate. In *Gold* (2001), a suite of five etchings, Tuttle adds one or more squares of gold leaf (and in the fifth print, platinum leaf) to each print on top of colored aquatinted shapes in order to investigate how the underlying colors inform the nature of the overlaid gold surface. Rather than simply reproducing a matrix, printmaking for Tuttle also offers new insights into the nature of colors: from the controlled application of different colors to chance encounters of pigments mixing on different surfaces and under the weight of the press as in a work like *Ink in Fiber* (2009).

TRANSPARENCY

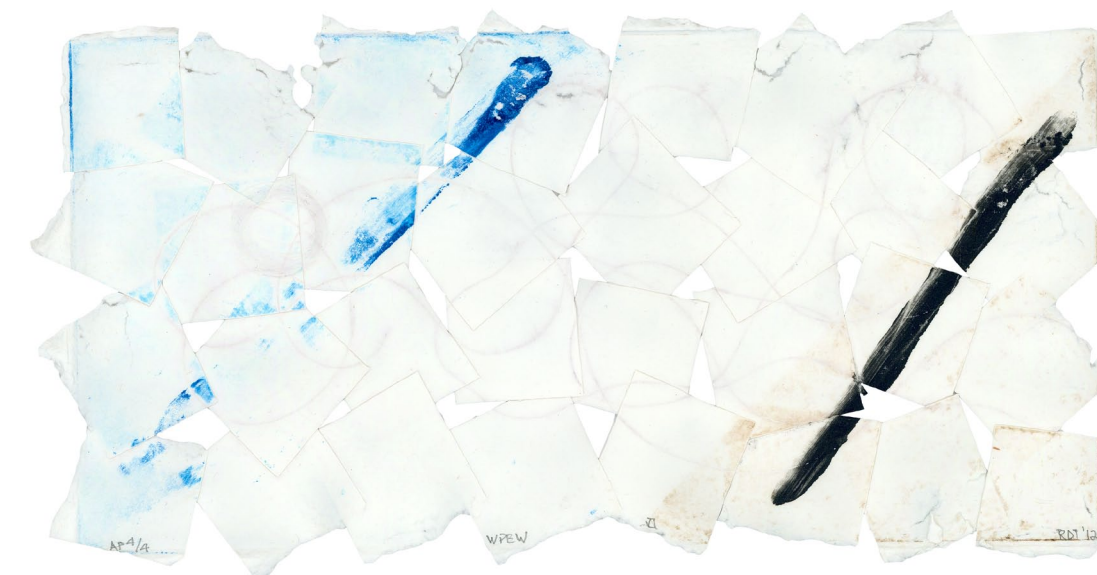
Printmaking allows Tuttle to deploy complex overlays achieving a balancing act between opacity and transparency, visibility and invisibility. The overlaps through which printing delivers and subtracts information find their most telling, and almost baroque, expression in the artist's 16-part series *Cloth* (2002–2005). This mixed-media print series features different textiles collaged into the prints, attached with glue, and often embedded in the printing process as *chine-collés*.³ Each textile reacts differently to the process of transferring and receiving ink; each one delivers different information—a complex and exuberant interplay of identity and difference. As an encrustation of physical traces of natural history in prints like those in the series *Censorship* (2003), fossils in the lithographic stone become visible through the printing process as subtle hues of different colors are printed on top of each other.



Label no. 12 from the series *Cloth* (2002–2005)

SUBJECT

Tuttle has a profound interest in the performative qualities of materials as "lively things," one that in recent years has increasingly centered around the peculiar relationship between paper, ink, and the press. "Ink on paper, oil and water, these two infinities resist," explains Tuttle. "Paper is wetted to receive the greasy ink. The eye can witness minutiae; the mind can receive every degree in the battle between opposites, tell us something accurate and precise not possible in ink alone or water alone."⁴ Series like *When Pressure Exceeds Weight* (2012–2013) visualize in various nuances the ways in which ink meets, mingles with, or is impressed into paper or pulp. In these prints, Tuttle combines the vertically printing hydraulic press with the horizontal etching press to index different movements and gravitational effects. The image is governed as much by the physical nature of the materials, the printing process, and chance as it is by the artist's aesthetic decisions. Both art-making and printmaking reveal themselves here as processes that for Tuttle are "not about making something happen, but allowing something to take place."⁵



WPEW VI (2012) from the series *When Pressure Exceeds Weight* (2012–2013)

The idea for a Richard Tuttle print retrospective originated in conversations with the artist about Early Romantic prints and developed into the decidedly lofty ambition to rethink the print. Richard Tuttle's ideal survey of prints would show his works as print collectors used to show them: unframed, as loose sheets, sometimes part of a portfolio to be carefully looked at, handled, and discussed together. For Tuttle, prints are objects that communicate the nature and even unknown truths of interactions, but they can only be understood through direct and attentive experience, one that opens the door to greater awareness and dialogue—
—Christina von Rotenhan, Guest Curator