

# ART

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IN THE

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# MAKING



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA

MUSEUM OF THE NORTH

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# Ceramics

## soda-fired porcelain

### TERESA SHANNON



Teresa Shannon was born and raised in Fairbanks. She divides her time between teaching ceramics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, making pots in her home studio, and driving the Zamboni at the ice rink.

#### *Coffee for Two* 2011

The coffee service represents a quiet, leisurely conversation between two people, not the quick cup of drive-through coffee. This piece combines a formal English tea service with a raw clay surface, emphasizing the tactile nature of clay and the intimate nature of the material.



### HOW it's MADE



1 Prepare clay to ensure even consistency.



2 Center clay on the spinning wheel.



3 Throw the pot.



4 Shape carefully.



5 Dry the pot slowly.



6 Trim excess clay from the bottom.



7 Attach handles, spouts, etc.



8 Finish drying.



9 Bisque fire to make the clay permanent.



10 Apply glaze.



11 Fire at 2000+ degrees to melt the glaze.



12 Remove pots from the kiln.

# Ceramic Tools



## Sponge

Used to wet and smooth clay



## Cutting Wire



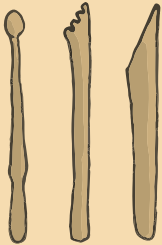
## Rib

For shaping clay



## Needle Tool

For scoring and cutting clay



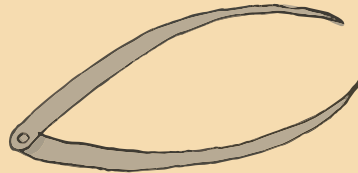
## Wooden Modeling Tools



## Trimming Tool

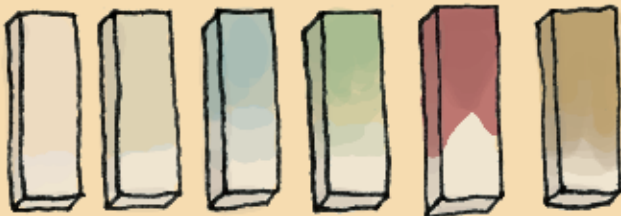
## Calipers

For measuring



# Glazes

A glaze is a glassy coating that is melted onto a pot during firing. It adds strength and beauty to the pot while making it non-porous.



**Pots have a life of their own once I've made them.**

*They go into people's homes. People wrap their hands around them and touch them to their lips.*

*They become integrated into people's lives.*

– Teresa Shannon

# Clay Bodies

Clay is made of tiny particles created when rocks rich in silicates are eroded over long periods of time. Potters add compounds to clay to change the texture and firing time.



## Earthenware

Often high in red iron oxide, earthenware can be used in its natural state, straight from the ground. It is very plastic and fired at low temperatures.



## Stoneware

Stoneware is fired at high temperatures and forms a very hard and durable surface.



## Porcelain

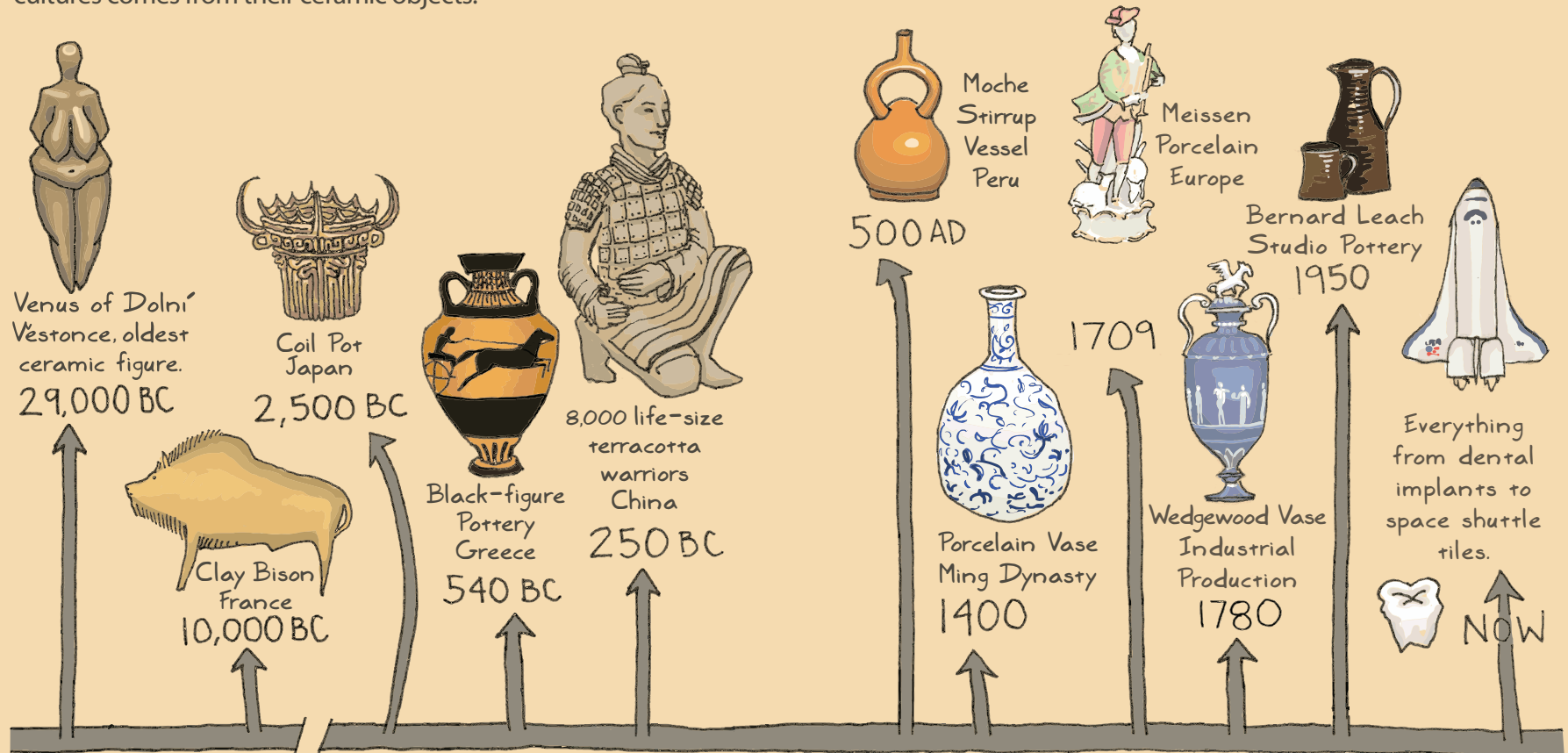
Porcelain is made of very pure clay and can be shaped into delicate, even translucent, forms. "Fine china" dishes are made of porcelain, which was first made in China.

The three most common clay bodies are shown here.



# HISTORY OF CERAMICS

Ceramics is an ancient technology developed independently around the world where there were natural clay deposits. From 30,000 year old Venus figures to ancient Greek vases and Peruvian water vessels, much of what we know about past cultures comes from their ceramic objects.



# Painting

## acrylic and pastel

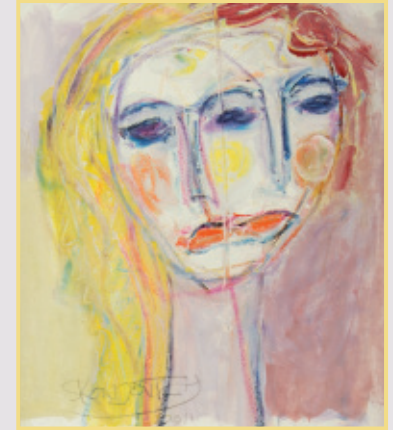
### ALFRED SKONDOVITCH 1927 – 2011

Alfred Skondovitch was born in England to Russian Jewish immigrants. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he studied with the German Expressionist Hans Hoffman in New York. He exhibited at prominent galleries, where his work hung side by side with that of Willem de Kooning, Richard Diebenkorn, Nell Blaine, and Milton Resnick. In the late 1950s, he visited friends in Alaska, where he fought forest fires and met his wife, Patti. They briefly returned to New York but decided to raise their family in Alaska. Alfred spent 60 years painting in Fairbanks.



### **Untitled Figure** 2011

Alfred Skondovitch painted one of art history's time-honored subjects, female nudes, in the bright colors of 20th century, synthetic paints. This is one of the last paintings Alfred made during his lifetime.



***I produce my art because I have to,  
the way other people breathe. I have worked since  
childhood. In order to express myself, I must get the  
ideas in my head on paper or canvas. My life is my art,  
just as my family is my life. I feel you are influenced by  
others in your art and you also influence others.  
It is this cauldron that makes the artist.***

– Alfred Skondovitch

# Brushes



## **Rigger Brush** **Siberian Weasel Hair**

Round with long hairs, riggers are used to paint fine lines.

Siberian weasel hair is prized for watercolor brushes because of its strength and ability to hold a fine point.



## **Quill Brush** **Russian Blue Squirrel Hair**

Quill brushes are often used for lettering.

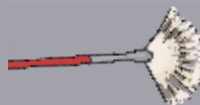
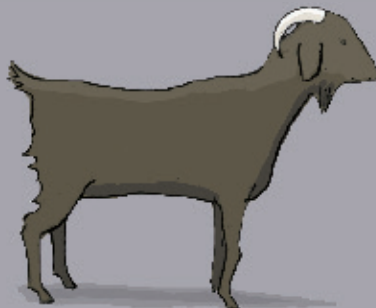
Blue squirrel tail hair is very absorbent and is used for watercolor and inks.



## **Mop Brush** **Black Goat Hair**

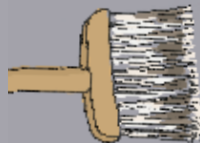
Mop brushes are great for wetting large areas.

Black Goat hair holds a large volume of water, making it excellent for mops and wash techniques.



## **Fan Brush** **Badger Hair**

Fans are good for blending or creating texture effects.



## **Blender Brush** **Badger Hair**

These large brushes are used for blending or glazing.

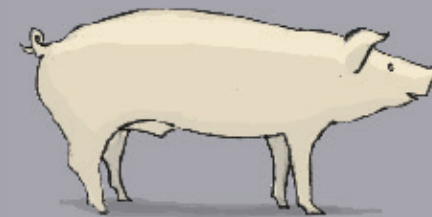
Badger hair is thickest at the tips, giving these brushes a bushy appearance.



## **Flat Brush** **Hog Bristle**

Flat brushes are used for broad strokes or fine lines if used on edge.

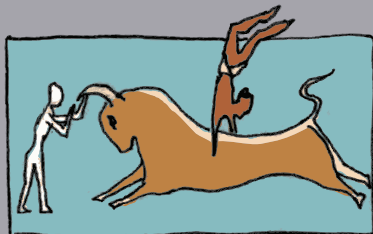
Hog bristles are strong, resilient, and good for thicker paints such as oil and acrylic.



# HISTORY OF PAINTING

Paint is made by combining pigment with a binder.

Most historical changes in painting styles are connected to the development of new materials.



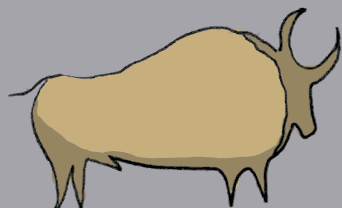
## FRESCO

Pigment is mixed with water and painted on a thin layer of wet plaster. The pigment binds to the plaster as it dries. The first frescos date back to 1500 BC.

## ENCAUSTIC



(beeswax + pigment)  
Beeswax is heated and combined with pigment. This paste is applied to a wood surface, then allowed to cool and harden.



## CAVE ART

30,000 year old paintings of animals, such as lions, mammoths, and bison, are found in caves in Spain and France.

## EGG TEMPERA

(egg yolk + pigment)

Egg tempera is very durable.

It must be applied in thin layers, and the rapidly drying egg yolk mixture requires constant adjusting.



## OIL PAINT

(linseed oil + pigment)

Oil paint originated in Afghanistan as early as 500 AD. By 1500 it had spread and almost entirely replaced egg tempera. Paint was kept in leather sacks or pig bladders before the invention of paint tubes in the 1800s!

## WATERCOLOR

(gum arabic + pigment)

Watercolor as we know it began in the 1700s with the invention of moist watercolor cakes. They were transportable and could be taken outdoors.

## OIL PASTELS

## ACRYLIC PAINT

(plastic polymer + pigment)

## SPRAY PAINT

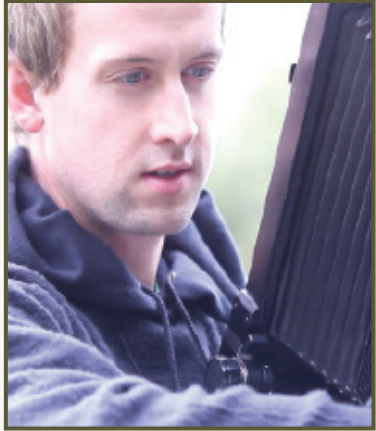
Used in graffiti art  
1970



# Photography

## collodion wet-plate

### ADAM OTTAVI



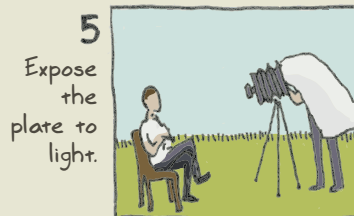
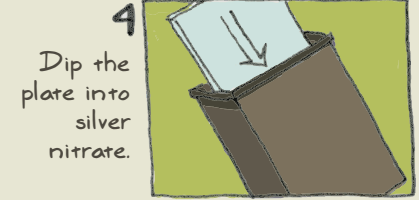
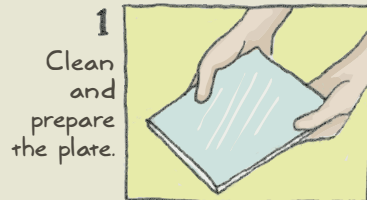
Adam Ottavi was born in Iowa and currently lives in Fairbanks, where he teaches art and photography at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and runs an organic garden. While Adam uses contemporary cameras, he is primarily interested in historic and alternative methods of photography.

### *Boe* 2011

Adam Ottavi works with a photographic process from the 1800s but incorporates modern technology for scanning and printing. Wet-plate collodion photography uses a glass plate to make the negative. Fingerprints and imperfections in the emulsion are part of the beauty evident when the plate is digitally scanned and printed.



### HOW it's MADE





# Photography Tools



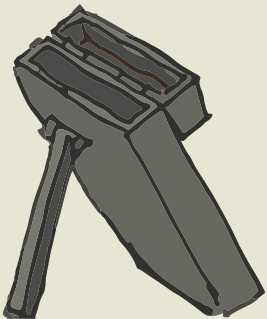
## Glass Cleaning Supplies

Alcohol, calcium carbonate, and elbow grease are more effective than commercial glass cleaner.



## Chemical Preparation Materials

The process requires accuracy, organization, and patience!



## Silver Nitrate Bath

This box contains the solution that makes collodion sensitive to light.

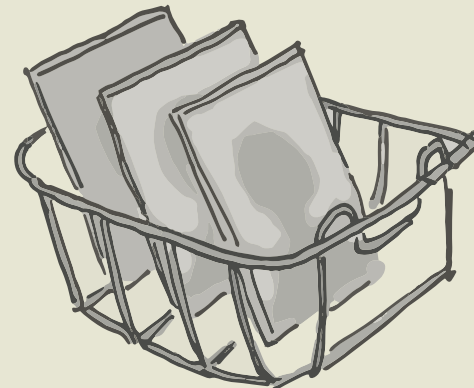
*I try to create a private, intimate feeling in my photographs. The play between the private moment of how the photograph is made and the public nature of displaying it is fascinating to me. It is like revealing secrets, especially the poisonous photographs, the ones that are a little risqué, the ones that entice and provoke us.*

– Adam Ottavi



## Alcohol Lamp

The small flame heats the plate slowly to cure the varnish that protects the emulsion.

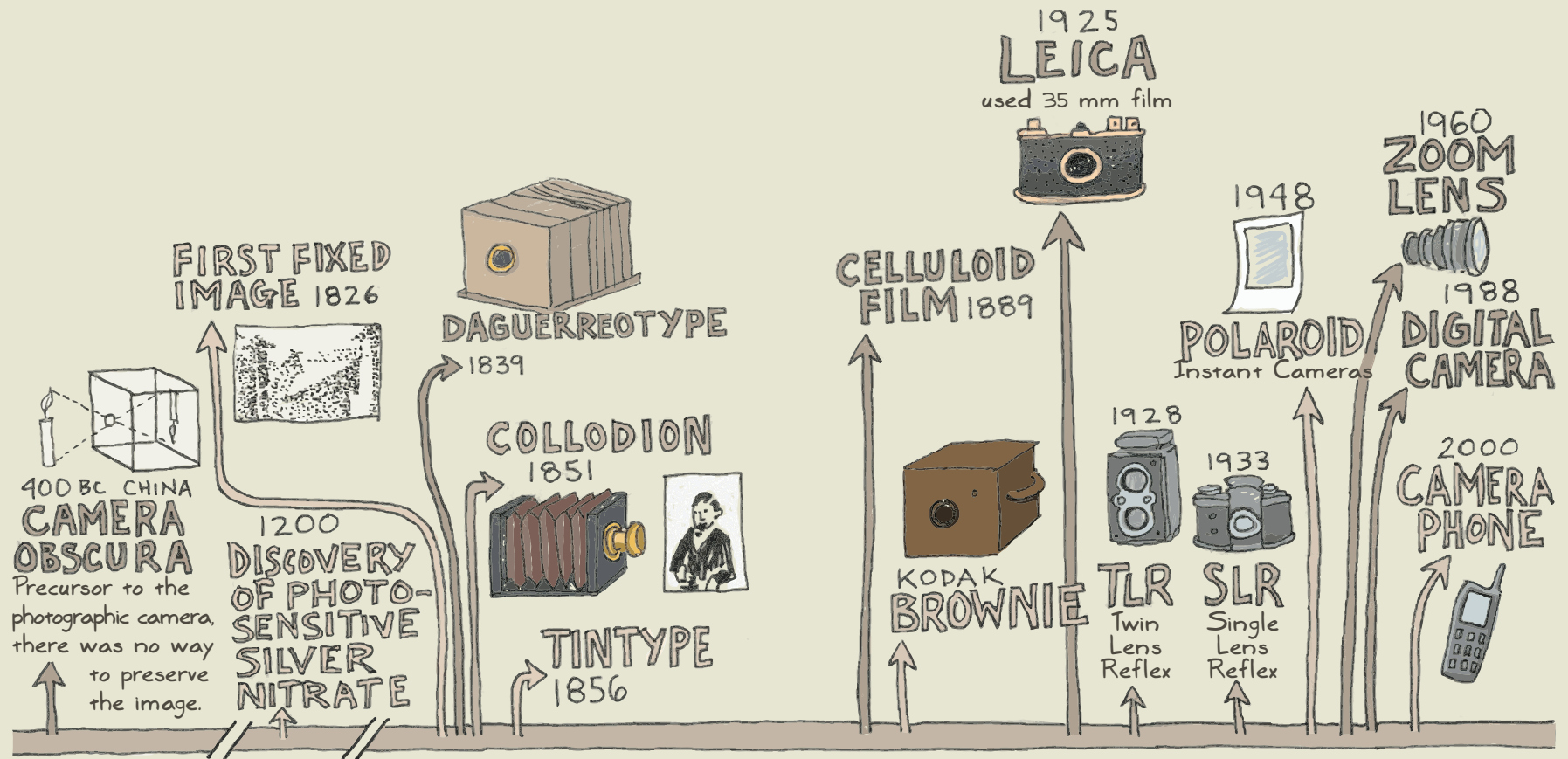


## Dish Rack

Adam uses a metal rack for drying plates. Traditional racks are made of wood.

# HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The word photography is derived from Latin words that mean "light drawing." It is a recent art form that has evolved along with advances in chemistry and physics.



# Printmaking

woodcut

## SARA TABBERT



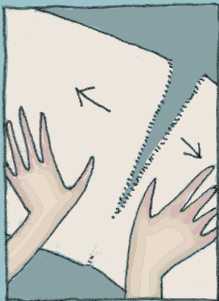
Sara Tabbert was born in Ohio and raised in Fairbanks. She lives in the Goldstream Valley with five sled dogs and is an avid skier and blueberry picker. Sara has worked with students across Alaska in the Artist in the Schools program.

### *Nest* 2011

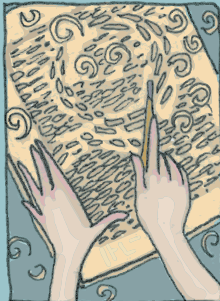
Sara Tabbert uses a Japanese method of wood block printmaking and a European-design printing press, but her imagery is all Alaskan. Her passion for natural materials is evident by the wood blocks she carves and her choice of subject matter. Sara prints repeatedly on both sides of thin Japanese paper to achieve added depth.



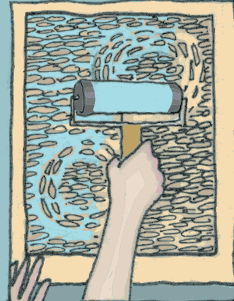
## HOW it's MADE



1 Tear paper to fit the printing block.



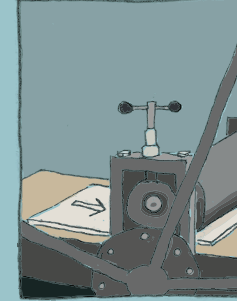
2 Carve the wooden block.



3 Ink the wooden block.



4 Place the paper on top of the inked block.



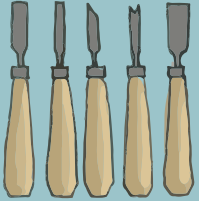
5 Run the paper and block through the press to transfer ink to the paper.



6 Repeat the process as needed with different blocks and colors of ink.



# Printmaking Tools



## Carving Knives

The knives are used to remove the section of the wood block that the artist does not want to print.



## Brayer

A brayer is used to roll the printing ink over the surface of the wood block.



## Ink

Printing ink comes in many colors, which the artist can use alone or mix together to create new shades.

## Paper is made from the fibers of a wide variety of plants.

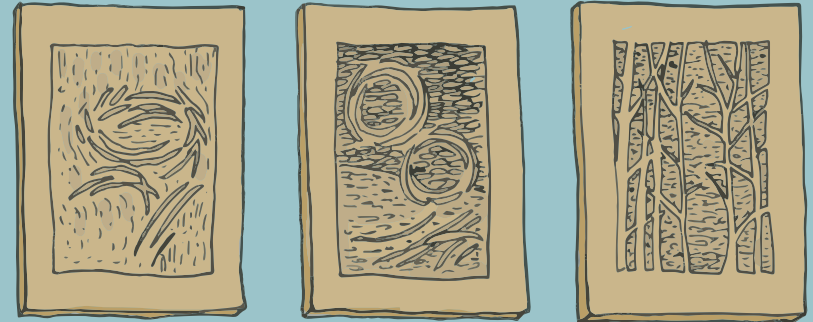
Different plant fibers have very different characteristics that affect the quality and appearance of the paper.



*I think there is an idea out there that with art you start with a product in mind, but I rarely start with a fixed idea. Frequently the thing that I want to talk about comes to me in the middle of making something.*

– Sara Tabbert

# Carved Wood Blocks

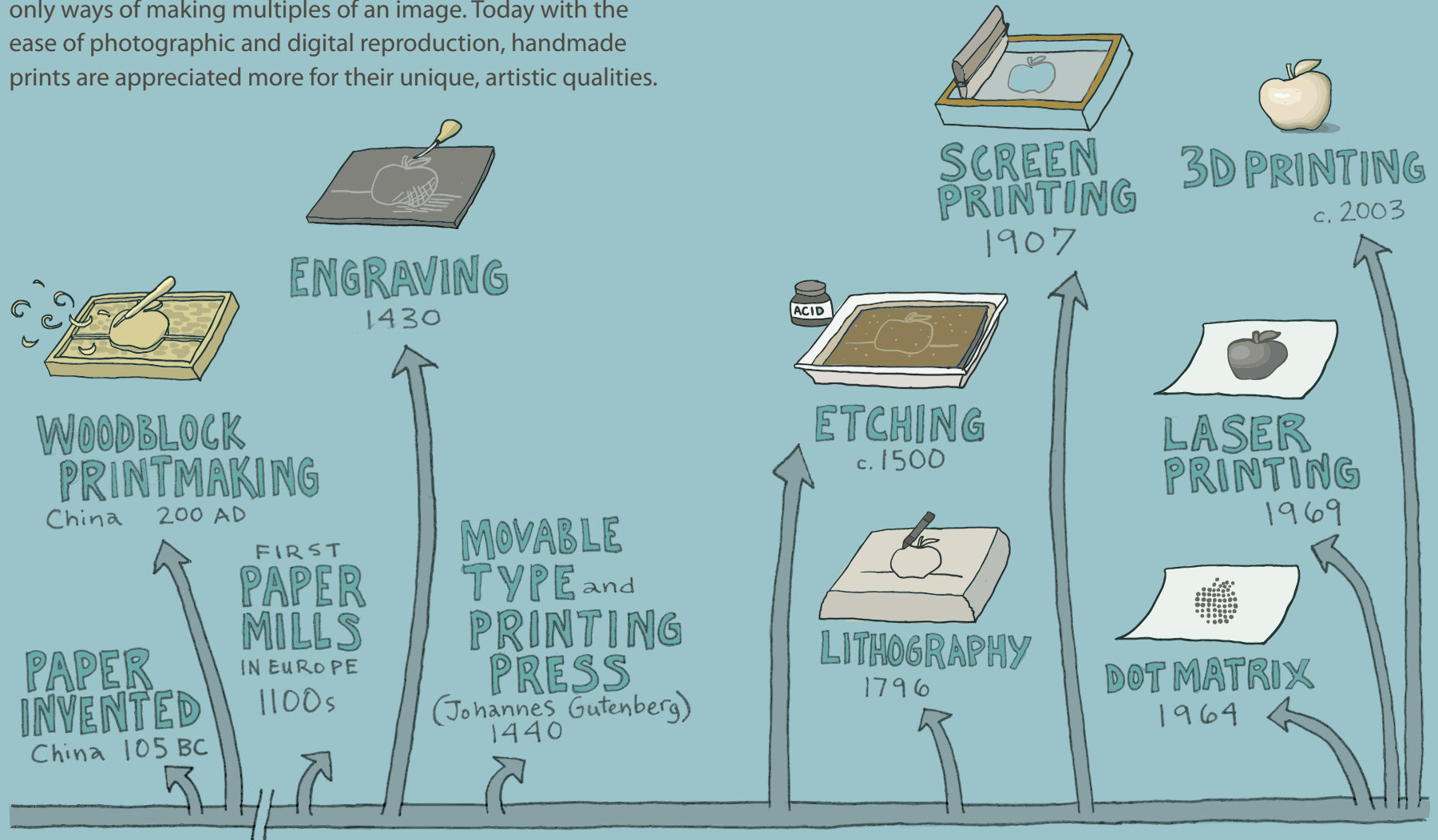


## Printmakers make things backwards!

Because the final image is the reverse of the carved block, printmakers learn to flip the image in their minds. Multiple wood blocks are used to print the single final image.

# HISTORY OF PRINTMAKING

Printmaking was originally popular because it was one of the only ways of making multiples of an image. Today with the ease of photographic and digital reproduction, handmade prints are appreciated more for their unique, artistic qualities.



## GLEN SIMPSON



Glen Simpson was born in Atlin, British Columbia of both Tahltan-Kaska Indian and pioneer Canadian heritage. He is interested in reinterpreting traditional Alaska Native forms and imagery in materials that are nontraditional and often unexpected.

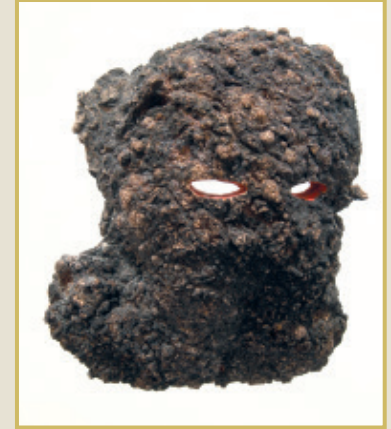
***Simplicity is very important to me,  
cutting things down to the core, the essence.  
I don't like things that are worked and worked.  
I don't like seeing things where I'm aware of the  
time spent in the production.***

– Glen Simpson

### ***Nek'el'eene Mask*** 2012

Glen Simpson is inspired by the tales of wild men that are ubiquitous throughout Alaska. The Inupiat of Bering Strait warn of the “Whistler” who lives in piles of driftwood and can no longer speak words. The Koyukon of the Interior have *nek'el'eene*, “the Sneaker” or “Woodsman” in English.

These men committed crimes so serious that they were banished from society. In isolation, they lost much of what made them human and became silent and elusive wild men.



# Wood cutting Tools



## Crooked Knife

Used to remove wood from concave areas, the handle is made from moose antler.

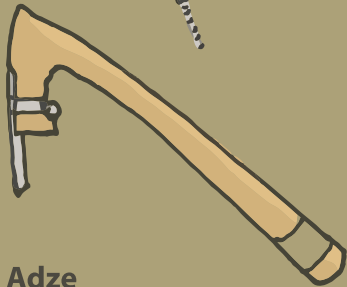
## Straight Knife

General purpose blade



## Hand Drill

Commercial "egg beater" style hand drill



## Adze

Used to remove wood quickly

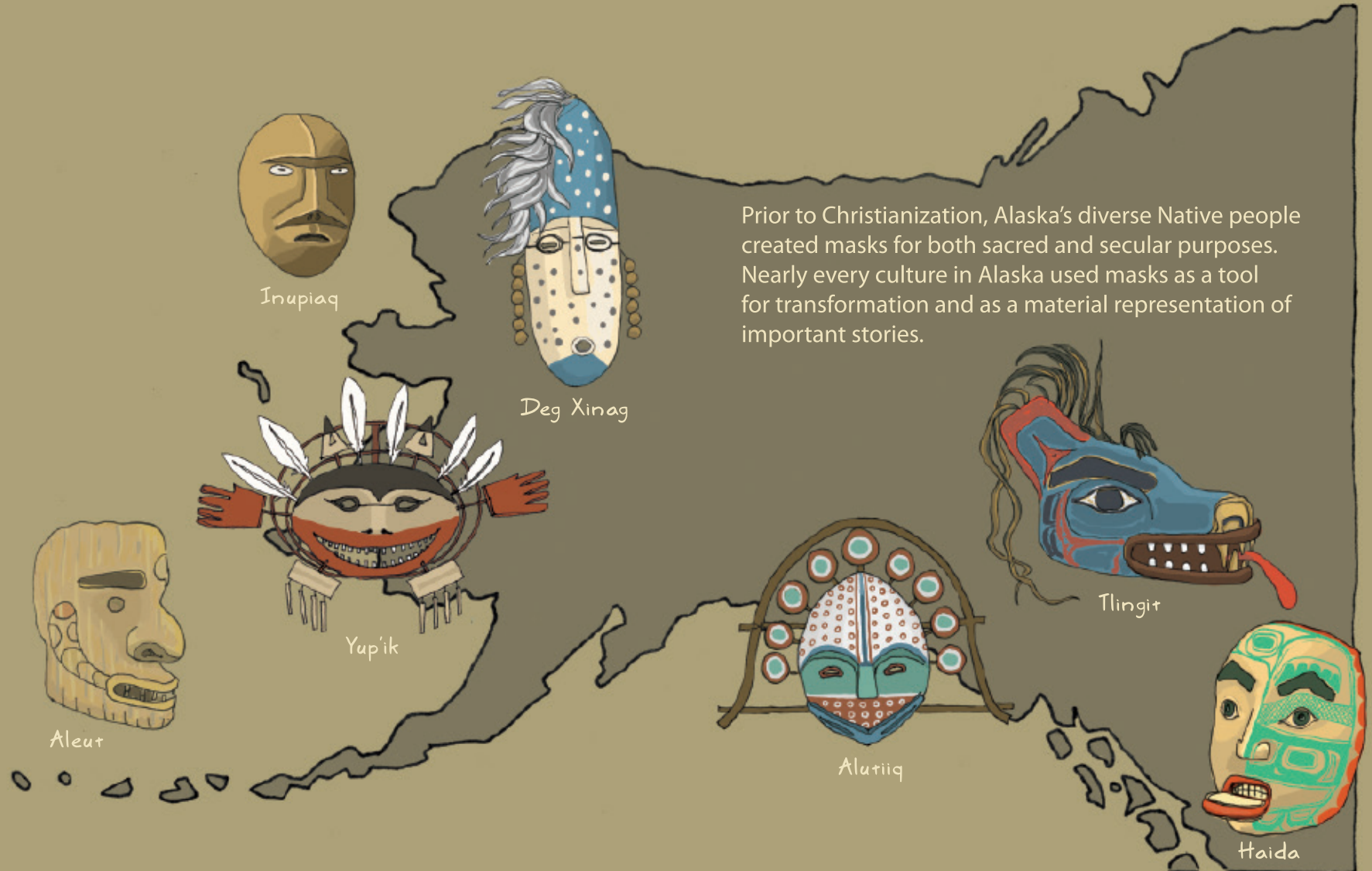
## Sharpening Tools

Leather paddle and chrome polish are used to put the final, polished edge on cutting tools.



Burls are growths on trees caused by environmental stress, damage, or disease (fungal or insect attack). They can range in size from a few ounces to hundreds of pounds.

# MASKS AROUND ALASKA







Many special exhibits are developed entirely by the University of Alaska Museum of the North. These are 100% funded by private donations and grants.

A special thanks to the donors who made the 2012 special exhibit, *Art in the Making*, and other exhibits possible.

View interviews with the artists from this exhibit.

<http://bit.ly/artinthemaking>



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#### **Art in the Making Exhibition Credits**

##### **Guest Curator**

Mareca Guthrie, UAMN Curator of Fine Arts

##### **The artists and their families**

Adam Ottavi

Teresa Shannon and Johnnie Williams

Glen and Melissa Simpson

Alfred and Patti Skondovitch

Sara Tabbert and Brandon McGrath-Bernhard

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Steve Bouta, Coordinator of Exhibitions and Design

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Theresa Bakker, Media Coordinator

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Nathan Feemster, Student Assistant

Eric Henderson, Student Assistant

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