LINO CUT PRINTMAKING
A BRIEF OVERVIEW

A Lino Cut is a form of printmaking where the artist uses fine wood carving tools to cut a relief block from a sheet of linoleum. Lino cuts produce bold and expressive prints, and give a final result similar to that of a woodblock print. Lino is obviously much easier to carve though, and it for this reason that many printmakers prefer lino cuts.

Here is a picture of a linoleum (lino) block that has been carved for printing. Please note that the block will produce mirror images. So any text or image carved into the block will be reversed when printed.

lino block

print

A linoleum cutter has different blades that are interchangeable. Different blades will produce different textures and cut widths. There are two main types of lino cutter blades, the "u" gouge and the "v" gouge.

U-gouge

V-gouge

When you are using a lino-cutter it is important to follow safety rules to avoid ruining your block, or cutting yourself.

The lino cutter blade has to be secure in the handle.

Your blade should skim the surface of the block, not gouge into it. To achieve this, you need to ensure your hold your blade at less than a 45 degree angle.

It is important to create a drawing that will reproduce well in a print. Any part of a print that is cut away will remain the colour of the paper. Any part left raised will hold the ink and be the 'positive' space of the print.

a lino block being cut for printing

Once you have transferred and cut your lino block, it is time for the printmaking to begin.

Printmaking ink is used for lino cuts. It comes in many colours. We use a water based ink for our printmaking. The ink is placed on a sheet of glass and rolled out with a **brayer** until it is the right consistency (usually the texture of an orange peel)

rubber brayer   ink on sheet of glass   rolling out the ink

After the ink has reached to right texture and consistency, it is time to ink your lino block. The brayer used to spread the ink is also used to add the ink to the block. The brayer loads ink onto the block in through pressure and even strokes. Too much ink on the block will cause a sloppy print. Too little ink on the block will make the print less detailed. Artist proofs help you finesse the amount of ink you will use.

After the lino block is inked, it is placed ink side up and a blank piece of paper is put on top of the block. A baren is used to push the ink into the paper. You rub the baren on the back of the paper in circular motion making sure that you cover the entire block to transfer the ink in a uniformed manner.

the baren
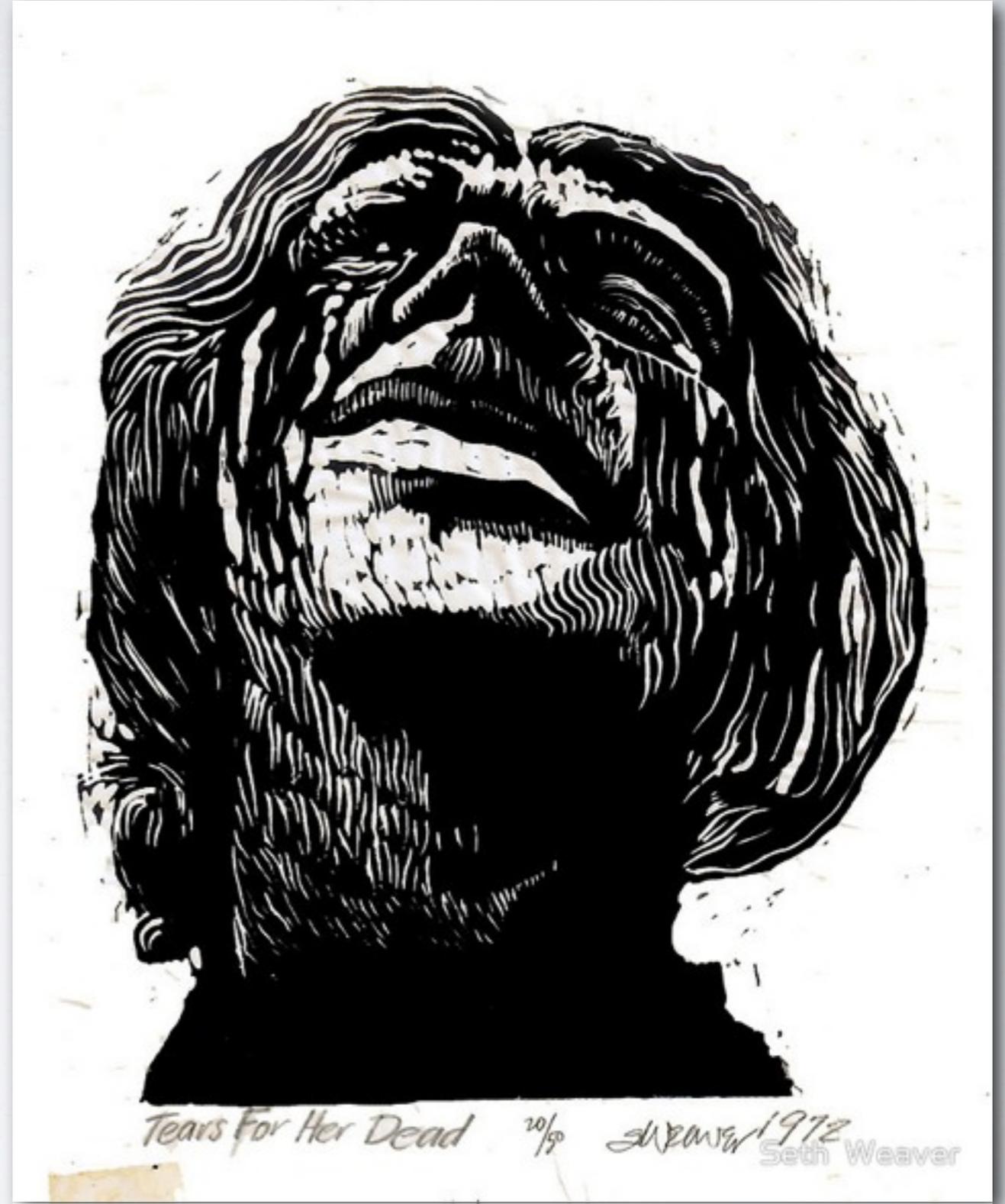
Tears For Her Dead   20/50   SWeaver 1972
Seth Weaver

The Artist's Proof

The Artist's Proof (or A.P.) are the first pulled prints you create. They are generally a test, or first run to test your inking, cutting or judge how well your print looks. These prints should always be labelled "A.P." on the bottom right hand side of the paper. For serious art collectors, an A.P. print is far more valuable than one of an edition.

Signing, Numbering & Titling

Each print from the same block should have the same title, unless it has been altered by colour or reduction. The title should be located at the bottom centre of the paper, close to the bottom edge of the print. The artist's signature should be located at the bottom right hand corner of the paper close to the edge of the print. The print number and edition go on the bottom left hand corner of the paper near the bottom edge of the print.

<u>Editions</u>

Because prints are meant to be done in multiples, we call the number of prints done in one session as an edition.

When you are printmaking, you create as many prints as you would like, keeping them in order you printed and let them dry on the drying rack.

Once they are dry, you count them. If you printed five prints, then you have created an edition of five. You must number each print it's order out of five.

Eg. 1/5, 2/5, 3/5 etc.

This is the number you see on the bottom of any print. It lets you know that it is a limited edition and which particular number of the edition you own.

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