

Canal With Gondolier by Martin Roberts
Lithograph on Paper - Main Subject: Scenic



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Dimensions (As Shown)
22W x 34H Inches
55.88W x 86.36H cm

Medium
Lithograph on Paper

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About Martin Roberts

Martin Roberts began his artistic career as a boy with a brownie box camera. Today, he is one of the most collected and owned artists in the country, with his works in such spectacular settings as the Venetian and Bellagio Resorts, the Vatican or in simple stores of main streets across America. His works capture the rustic detail and atmosphere of Mediterranean landscapes.

Martin's work is visually appealing with a detail unimaginable because he is a mixed-media artist. His work is collected as a fine art paintings, which in fact they are...but they have all started with extraordinary black and white photographs over which he layers acrylics, watercolors, and oil paints. The result is exquisite, three dimensional, extremely informal and relaxing, with cascading flowers, foliage and textured colored walls.

Mediterranean, Provence and Tuscany subjects are his specialization with series featuring Venice and quaint English Cottages as well. One of his most well known pieces entitled "Cardinal at the Vatican" was produced for Cardinal Hamer of the Vatican. His exhibitions have included the Leica Gallery in Manhattan; a distinction so rarely given to American artists.

I want to create a work of art with a composition so compelling that my collectors say that this is something that they must own. Not because of the financial rewards it brings me, which in fact is nice&but it is so extremely flattering that people whom I have never met have my work hanging in their homes.

Not long after the beginnings of photography in the mid-1800s, hand-tinted colors were applied to black and white photos to enhance the image and create the appearance of color. This process continued to grow in popularity until the emergence of color film. A renewed interest in hand-tinting came about in the 1960s and appears, once again, to be gaining popularity.

While some people indulge in photo tinting for fun these days, adding color to black and white Photos has been a passion of Orange County artist/photographer Martin Roberts for more than 25 Years.

"I'm the only person I know who shoots black and white film in the tropics," he said.

Roberts describes his work as hand-painted, rather than hand-tinted. He uses acrylics, watercolors, gouaches and oils--often on the same piece to create different shades and textures.

"I consider my work hand-painted since I use a variety of paints, layering and adding color until the work becomes an art itself," he said. "The colors vary between the different mediums. That's why I use many types of paint." I look for what is going to give the best color. My goal is to emulate a striking realism in the work. I want the colors to be believable."

His interest in painting and photography has over the years become a successful career--his prints are sold throughout the world and have enabled him to be represented in some of the most prestigious galleries in the world.

"Essentially, hand-tinting is a process that attempt to turn black and white photo into a color photograph, said Roberts."

Some people go for the surreal look; neon green grass, purples, sky colors that aren't found naturally."

Most beginning hand-tinters use photo oils, specially prepared colors (available in most art supply stores) designed to tint photographs, rather than the paints Roberts prefers. However, he says, no amount of hand-tinting or painting can "save" a poor quality photo. The strength of the work comes from the strength of the image.

"The image is only as strong as the photograph," he said. "You want something that will emotionally move people. The photo has to be able to stand on its own without any paint on it. I don't just pop out of a car and shoot a cow and paint it purple. I'm trying to shoot the perfect image. Something magical. No amount of paint or effort will save an image that's not substantial."

Lucky timing has blessed some of his photos, but sometimes a more direct approach has served him. While shooting an archway in the Vatican, Roberts noticed a priest proceeding in the direction he was going to shoot.

"I approached the gentleman, explained that I was a professional photographer and asked him if he would mind walking through the portico so I could have him silhouetted against a statue at St. Peter's Basilica.

"He looked at me and said, "I'm not going that far." "But you'll do it for me won't you?" I asked. "He smiled and nodded and then proceeded through the archway. Just before he reached that point, he took off his hood and I saw the red cardinal's cap. The gentleman was Cardinal Hammer, one of 13 cardinals who live at the Vatican.

"That shot is one of my most popular and in fact, an original hangs in the Vatican today."

Lithograph on Paper

This printing technique uses a planographic process in which prints are pulled on a special press from a flat stone or metal surface. The surface has been chemically treated so that ink sticks only to the design areas, and is repelled by the non-image areas. Lithography was invented in Germany in 1798. The early history of lithography is dominated by great French artists such as Daumier and Delacroix, and later by Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Braque and Miro.

Based on the principle that oil and water repel, a Lithograph is created when an artist produces an oil-based or pen image on a stone or piece of metal. This surface is then moistened and covered with an oil-based ink. The resulting chemical reaction between the oil and water drives away the ink on the surface except where the drawing was first done. Fine quality paper is then placed against the surface and a lithographic press is used to create the print. Modern technology and processes have provided artists with many unique methods with which to create magnificent lithographs. In the 1890s color lithography became enormously popular with French artists, Toulouse-Lautrec most notably of all, and by 1900 the medium in both color and monotone was an accepted part of printmaking, although France and the US have used it more than other countries. George Bellows, Alphonse Mucha, Pablo Picasso, Jasper Johns, David Hockney and Robert Rauschenberg are a few of the artists who have produced most of their prints in the medium.

As a special form of lithography, the Serilith process is sometimes used. Serilith are mixed media original prints created in a process where an artist uses the lithograph and serigraph process. The separations for both processes are hand drawn by the artist. The serilith technique is used primarily to create fine art limited print editions.

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