

BAGGED LANDSCAPE #5

Intaglio Etching

Nance Bracken

1977



Bagged Landscape #5

Intaglio Etching 1977

Size: 9 x 11 inches

Paper: Stonehenge 100% rag

Edition 50



The landscape has always been a subject I could not resist using in my art. The landscapes depicted in my etchings are areas I have visited, photographed, and sketched. I begin with a landscape that has particular visual appeal to me. As the work develops the beginning mental image is transformed into a new landscape. Familiar objects emerge in unfamiliar proportions and functions. A landscape fantasy with a surreal atmosphere.



Etching is an intaglio printmaking process which uses an acid solution to produce an image on a metal plate. The plate is first prepared with an acid resistant covering called a "ground". Steel etching needles are used to draw through the ground exposing the metal surface. When the image is completed the plate is submerged in an acid bath which allows the acid to act on the exposed metal. By varying the length of time the plate remains in the acid bath, a wide range of line tonalities can be achieved. This is a critical process and each acid bath or "bite" is timed and watched carefully.

When the etch is completed the ground is removed and the plate is rolled with an intaglio etching ink. Then the plate is wiped with a tarlatan rag (like a starched cheesecloth) to remove the ink from the surface of the plate but leaving the ink in the bitten lines. At this stage you can see the image on the plate, although it is reversed from how the print will appear.





Inked Plate



Wiped Plate



Once the plate has been wiped it is placed on the press bed. Registration sheets are used to keep the paper and plate aligned. The paper used for this print is a very durable 100% rag paper. It is soaked in water for approximately 1 hour to soften the fibers. When ready to print the paper is rolled between blotters to remove excess moisture and placed on top of the etched plate. Wool blankets are then placed on top of the paper, and the blankets, paper, and plate are pulled through the press by turning the rollers.

The softened paper has been pressed into the bitten lines picking up the ink and reproducing the plate image. This is the first "proof". Several proofs may be pulled before I am completely satisfied with the image, the ink, and the paper. When this step is completed, I decide how many prints will be pulled from the plate and begin running the edition. The number of the print and the size of the edition are written in pencil at the bottom of the print along with the signature and the title.





Blotting Paper



Pulled Print



Nance Backon 1980