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Collography

Collography evolved during the twentieth century; the word collography combines the ancient Greek words *koll* (or *kola*), meaning “glue,” and *graph*, meaning the activity of drawing. A collography plate differs from other intaglio plates in that it is built up as opposed to being etched or cut down. Layers of fabric, string, pieces of cardboard, and/or other materials are glued on a rigid matrix surface, and the plate is then coated with acrylic gesso or acrylic medium to make it impermeable.

Collographs are often printed as intaglio but can also be printed as relief or as an embossed image with or without ink. Because of the multiple levels of the collograph, the medium lends itself beautifully to printing in color.

Some artists prefer to use a thin wooden block as the base for a collograph, but any hard board will work. The board should first be waterproofed by sealing it with acrylic gesso or medium; do this on both sides, to prevent warping. When the plate is dry, you can apply different pieces and textures to it—string, fabric, sandpaper, carborundum grit, and so on—gluing them down with acrylic medium. You can also use palette knives to make marks that will retain ink. Acrylic compounds make the best glues for collographs because they are waterproof when dry, allowing the dampened paper to print without sticking to the board. Layers of elements can be added and the whole plate given another coating of acrylic gesso or medium to keep it waterproof, but the combined height of the plate, from the surface to the highest glued-on elements, should not be greater than three-sixteenths to one-quarter of an inch so that

Dail Fried, *Strata Toscana VII*, 2012,
collograph, 8 x 14 inches
(20.3 x 35.6 cm).
Courtesy of the artist.