



News & Views

A Dictionary of Glass Terms

Very often, in the course of researching your latest glass acquisition, you come across a glass term that you haven't heard before. Some terms are easy to decipher, while others require lots of searching before you unravel their meaning. This month's reference section is a work in progress. It is the first installment of the NDGA Glass Dictionary. The second installment is dependent on you. As you do your research and come across interesting glass terms, jot them down, find their meaning and send them in. Once you've sent in enough, we'll print part 2. Now get out there and research!

The following collection of glass definitions was submitted by Bert Kennedy.

Acid Cut Back – the process of dipping an object into acid for a controlled amount of time in order to achieve a desired cutting depth

Acid Etching – the process of covering glass with an acid-resist protective layer, scratching on a design, and then applying hydrofluoric acid to etch the pattern into the glass.

Annealing – a process that toughens glass and eliminates stress by heating and gradually cooling in an annealing oven, or lehr

Batch – the mixture of raw ingredients ready for melting into glass.

Best Metal – the highest quality batch of glass made by a company using the purest ingredients and highest lead content.

Blank – an annealed piece of glass ready to be marked for cutting or other decoration.

Cameo Engraving – an engraving process where the background is carved away to leave the design in relief (see Relief Cutting)

Cased – multiple layers of different colors of glass. Called overlay when cut to expose layers underneath.

Cold Work – to enhance a finished piece of blown or sculpted glass by polishing, grinding, carving, painting, etching, sandblasting, etc. It includes working with flat sheets of glass, as in stained glass windows.

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Copper Wheel Engraving – process of hand engraving by holding a glass to a revolving copper wheel which instantly cuts through the surface. Some of the best glass ever produced was done by highly skilled copper-wheel engravers who kept the cutting pattern in their minds while altering the cutting with rubbing oil continuously for hours on end.

Cut – a glass blank marked and then cut with various wheels (iron, stone or wood) and abrasive agents.

Decal – a picture, design, or label from specially prepared paper that is transferred to glass, usually by heating.

Diamond Point Engraving – hand cutting or machine cutting of glass with a diamond point tool (note that hardened metal shaped by heat treating to a sharp point has since replaced the more expensive diamonds for machine cutting).

Enamel – a liquid medium similar to paint applied and then permanently fused onto the object by heat.

Enameled – glass paint decoration applied to annealed glassware and low fired in a muffle kiln.

Engraving – method of cold-working glass by cutting into its surface with a need, diamond, or other sharp tool, or rotating wheel.

- The decoration of glass applied by holding the piece against the edge of revolving wheels made of stone, copper, or other materials.

Fire Polishing – reheating of a finished piece to remove tool or old marks.

- reheating a finished piece of glass in the glory hole (furnace) to remove tool marks (more commonly replaced with acid polishing.)

Fired-On – finishing colors that are baked on or fused by heat onto the outer surface of glass objects.

Fired-On Iridescence – a finish applied to glass by adding metallic salts, after which the glass is re-fired.

Flashed-On Iridescence – a finish applied to glass by dipping hot glass into a solution of metallic salts.



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Flashing – a very thin coating of a different color from that of the base color (thinner than casing or an overlay).

- A coating of a very thin layer of glass of one color over a layer of contrasting color.

Frit – sand-like substance consists of melted, cooled, and crushed or ground glass, available in a variety of sizes.

Gilding – an applied decorating technique with gold enamels or paints to finish glass objects.

Incising – the technique of cutting or engraving designs into the surface of glass.

Intaglio – an engraving or cutting made below the surface of glass so that the impression left from the design leaves an image in relief.

Iridescent – a coating of metallic chloride sprayed on a still hot piece of glass causing a multi-hued luster.

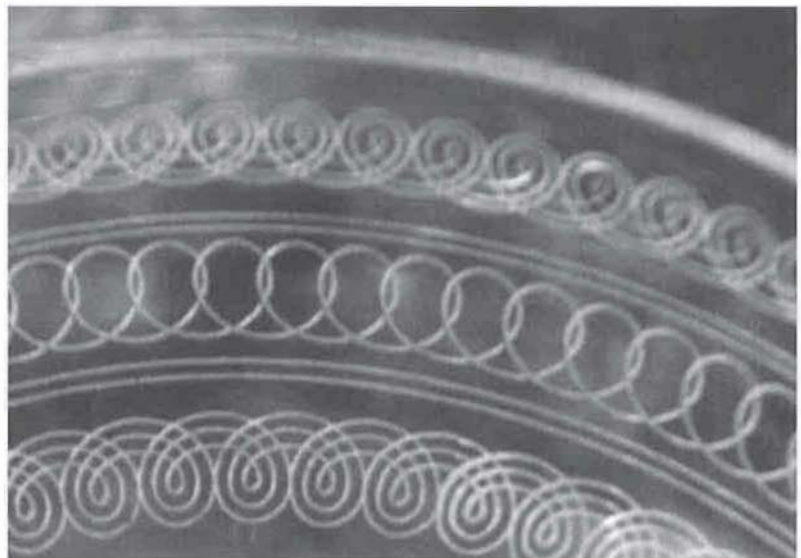
Low Relief – an engraving process where the background is cut away to a very low degree (see Relief Cutting).

Metal – a term used by chemists for a batch of glass (see best Metal).

Miter-Cut Engraving – glass cut with a sharp groove on a V-edged wheel.

Muffle Kiln – a low temperature (900-1200 degrees Fahrenheit) oven used for refiring glass to fix fire-on enameling. Note that a muffle can be a separate removable box, usually made of clay, which can be moved in and out of a kiln.

Needle Etching – a process of etching glass by machine. Fine lines are cut by a machine through a wax coating upon glass, then hydrofluoric acid is applied to etch the pattern into the glass.



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Relief Cutting – a difficult and expensive method of cutting glass by designing the outline on the surface and then cutting away the background. The design is then raised in relief similar to that of cameo engraving.

Sandblasted – a jet of fine sand blown against the surface of glass to cut a design.

Sandblasting – an American developed process where the design on a piece of glass is coated with a protective layer and then exposed surfaces that remain are sandblasted with a pressurized gun to create the design.

Satin Glass – an American Art Glass characterized by a smooth lustrous appearance obtained by giving layers of colored glass an all-over acid vapor bath.

Silk-screening (screen printing) – process of making a stencil to put a design on a screen of silk or other fine fabric. Areas to remain blank are coated with an impermeable substance. A printing medium is forced through the cloth onto printing surfaces such as glass, porcelain, ceramics, fabrics, etc.

Sprayed-on Iridescence – adding iridescence to glass by spraying it with particles of metallic salts.

Stained – a colored wash applied to an annealed piece of glass with a brush and then refired.

Transfers – a complete design printed on a paper backing that is removed from the backing, applied to glassware, and then fired on in a special enameling lehr.

(To be continued....it's up to you!)

Glass Articles - and Definitions - Needed

Why not share your knowledge about glass with others?

This extra section depends upon you. If you want more glass education articles, you must submit them.

The only thing glass collectors love more than buying glass, is talking about it.
We'd love to have you teach us about the glass you collect.

Please send your articles and definitions to me at editor@ndga.net. Remember, I can't print what I don't have.

Rosemary