

## Editorial

Welcome to the  
first edition of  
im:print!

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Welcome to the first edition of *im:print*, which marks a very special moment. You hold the first edition of an international peer-reviewed academic medium that will discuss the current state of printmaking and art created with the intention to be published. Although *im:print* is new, the subject has a long ancestry.

When Dr. Philipp Maurer transformed *Die Kleine Galerie* into the most important institution in Vienna to promote printmaking and graphic art, he also took on the responsibility for *Wiener Kunsthefte*, the oldest art magazine in print in Austria at this time. Subsequently, the magazine became the preferred source of information about printmaking and graphic art in Austria and its German-speaking neighboring countries.

A re-launch of the *Wiener Kunsthefte* created UM:DRUCK, a magazine for printmaking and visual culture that continues to grow, but only in the German speaking countries. The UM:DRUCK is published four times a year and consists of two books. One is dedicated to reviews of current shows, artwork, books, initiatives and events, and the other to the discussion of theory, history and concepts.

Recently those working on the UM:DRUCK saw the need to address to two pressing problems. The first was the number of reviews that should be included was growing and far exceeded the available space, which pushed theoretical articles off to the next issue. The result was a pile of manuscripts that deserved to be published but wasn't. The requests for UM:DRUCK articles to be translated as well as subscriptions from abroad posed the second.

After the Department of Graphic and Printmaking at the University of Applied Arts Vienna joined forces with UM:DRUCK and the Künstlerhaus Wien and took over editorial responsibility, the creation of *im:print* became inevitable.

*im:print* is dedicated to the publication of texts that create the basis for the critical discussion of printmaking and not to the reproduction of already published/printed art. We have witnessed the expansion of printmaking into the digital world and the publication of original works within computer networks and, therefore, will create a digital sister to *im:print* that offers audio/visual content: [www.im-print.org](http://www.im-print.org).

The decision to start a new academic journal was also driven by the dynamic development that printmaking has recently experienced. Today printmaking is moving into the center of contemporary art and the future will see more and more artists using concepts, strategies, ideas and techniques of printmaking. Printmaking is not only the beginning of media art, it is also part of its future; it is the base of trans-media art and the source for experience and inspiration for work that is based on the multiple.

In the last twenty years those involved with printmaking – artists, curators, historians, master printers, art universities, gallery owners, art traders, collectors, conservators – have noticed the fast and dynamic change that has happened in the field. We saw a development that was not restricted to only one area, neither geographically nor theoretical, neither technical nor conceptual.

During that time we saw the digital age arrive in the field of printmaking. This process allowed many printmaking artists and printmaking scholars to return to the pattern in the use of new technology for the publication of their original art that was usual in history and to redefine the role of printmaking and to develop new concepts of content, visualization and aesthetic.

Artists were involved in the invention of the means to print and always strived to improve the technology to print and publish. They were instrumental in developing the means to communicate through images with numerous individuals at a time without the need for them to be present at the same time in the same place. Through the centuries artists tried to have access to the newest and best technology. From early stencil print to relief print to engraving and etching to lithography to screen print, printmaking artists were the technical and political avant-gardes.

When offset print became the industry standard, ownership became prohibitively expensive and a trend in the printmaking world surfaced that it was a rather traditional rather than a contemporary approach to the production of art. There is obviously a traditional element in printmaking. Old techniques came forth with an understanding of traditional and time-tested material and their use was bound to the insight

into the techniques. Improvement of technical skill was achieved by research and comprehension of traditional values and qualities.

Today we see artists using all technical means to publish their original art without a mentioning of printmaking to avoid being connected, I assume, to the notion of printmaking as something old fashioned. Terminology has become important. What does it mean when museums do not call a screen print by name but describe it as screen print ink on canvas? Works selected for the large, contemporary shows are often done in the spirit and with the technique of printmaking but fail to mention it by name. Artists use printmaking as laboratory of visual culture. They work freely with published images, experiment with the message/image relation, actively use their work in political agitation and use their work as Petri dish to grow new strategies and images for the visual communication of our time.

These last twenty years also saw a remarkable change in the political reality in Europe. Since the Iron Curtain fell, Europe had to reinvent itself by overcoming habitual patterns that began with the Cold War to create a new perspective based on historic ground.

Art history when describing the last 60 years in Europe seldom mentions the important role that printmaking played in the continued dialog of artists in the East and West. Prints could be distributed easily, transport was cheap, loss to a certain degree acceptable. It was just printed matter, a cheap letter that could be slipped through the Curtain. Biennials and triennials, festivals and symposia of printmaking in the east and sometimes in the west of Europe became the place for the exchange of images, ideas, knowledge and information. Amongst these events, Krakow and Ljubljana probably stick out and while some smaller events disappeared when the political landscape changed completely, these two reinvented themselves.

It is not surprising that during the Cold War years, these events were not fully accepted in the West and the value of art exhibited there was questioned on ideological grounds again and again. This might be in part an explanation why, especially in the U.S., printmaking artists did not connect well with their colleagues engaged in networking events in former Communist countries. The U.S. and other Western countries developed their own structures, conferences, national and international juried shows, curated shows for festivals and associations that promoted printmaking.

Despite current available information about all these events, a gap remains and discussion is slow and inaccurate. The international and

intercultural dialog is a challenge. When preparing this publication we realized that text contributions that need to be translated twice revealed the difficulty hidden in subtle differences in terminology and language use. In preparing this book, some inaccuracy might still be found in texts and their translation, but awareness and goodwill could offer an opportunity to gain deeper understanding for the subject matter and the ideas that are expressed.

The desire to bridge the gap is demonstrated by the *Southern Graphic Council*, which has recently changed its name to *SGC International*, and by the *Triennial Krakow/Oldenburg/Vienna*, which became the *International Print Network*. The *Impact Conference* will be held next year in Australia thereby leaving Europe for the second time, and Triennials and Biennials in Asia have worked hard to turn their networks into global ones.

The *International Print Network* is providing the content for this first edition of *im:print*. Part of the Print Network at the Künstlerhaus in Vienna is the symposium matrix (May 28th and 29th, 2010), organized by Georg Lebzelter and Wojciech Krzywobłocki. The contributions to this symposium are collected in this book together with an additional text provided especially for this publication by Jürgen Weichardt, describing the recent history of printmaking to create a reference for the continuing discourse, this book intends to invite the worldwide community of printmaking artists, scholars, curators, collectors and connoisseurs to participate in.

To continue the discussion, the next edition of *im:print* is scheduled for publication in time for the *SGC international Conference* in St. Louis, Missouri in 2011. This first edition of *im:print* should serve as proof of concept and represents a call for papers for peer review and publication in the next edition (see p. 193).

Peers include known personalities in the field of printmaking such as Prof. Beauvais Lyons, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee; Prof. Jozef Muhovic, Academy of Fine Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Prof. Sigbert Schenk, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria; Assoc. Prof. Miida Seiichiro, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan; and Assoc. Prof. Scott Betz, Art Department, Winston Salem University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

With *im:print* we see the birth of an international forum dedicated to the future of printmaking, published in Vienna, the center of the Danube area, the birthplace of European woodcut and a city with the potential to interconnect the world of printmaking.