The International Senefelder Foundation. Colloquium in Offenbach 2017-12-06

Martin Lange opened the colloquium. In 1971 the Senefelder Foundation was set up in Offenbach in November 6th, 1971, to commemorate the 200th birthday of Alois Senefelder, the inventor of lithography. The aim of the foundation is to preserve the memory of this resourceful inventor, to promote young artists and technicians, to collect documents, items and lithographs, as well as to organise and support exhibitions that show the technique of lithography and its further development. Recently a Friends’ Association is founded with the goal to raise money. The website has an English translation.

Harry Ness is the chairman of the international work group for print and media history, founded in 1983 in Wolfenbüttel. The goal of the work group is to examine the technical artefacts, which are used to multiply texts and images as cause of and a result of changes in the society. By research shall the understanding of recent and future conditions of work, technical development and processes of civilisation increase. The necessary knowledge is searched in book history, technical *history* and historical and sociological sciences. The association publish the Journal of *Druckgeschichte* (*Journal of Printing History*). The website has no English translation.

In 2010 the work group found that Senefelder has left many traces in Offenbach. Dr. Ness told us that during the international conference of the Association of European Printing Museums at the Nederlands Steendrukmuseum in 2016 it was decided that Offenbach should be a centre of lithography and other printing techniques.

Gerhard Kilger is chairman of the International Senefelder Foundation. Gerhard Kilger is as well a lithographic artist. He talked about artistic stone printing and said that there is an anomaly in the history and technology of lithography. The invention of lithography gave birth to new professions, accentuated by the growing specialising of the lithography, which went from craft to industry. Then new printing techniques developed, and lithography became a commercially dead technique, only used by artists. Kilger compared the development of sailing ships to sailing boats navigated by enthusiasts.

Interest in the graphic arts I currently diminishing, and many lithographic print shops have been closed. One of the main goals for the Senefelder Foundation is to find new ways for stone printing.

Many lithographic artists and printers participated in the colloquium. From Sweden came Nina Bondesson and Jim Berggren, both from Gothenburg. The artists talked about their activities and showed pictures of their workshops and prints. Katri Ikävalko from Finland print lithographies on Japan paper and hang them in room installations. The images are constructed by wrinkling cloth and transform the patterns to landscapes. She also informed the colloquium that the Finnish association Pro Litografia has published a book on the Finnish lithography, written by Erkki Anttonen.

Lorena Pradel from Buenos Aires in Argentina teaches lithography in Taller Litográfico de la Cárcova. <https://museodelacarcova.una.edu.ar/noticias/taller-de-litografia-del-museo-de-la-carcova-aida-carballo_17061>. She talked very enthusiastically about her activities.

The last paragraph for the day was a discussion on the four theses for lithography which ware enclosed to the notice for the colloquium. The participants were divided in four groups each with on thesis to discuss.

Discussion

Group 1.

*Professional lithography has died in the 20th century. Presently there are worldwide few experts, the professional experience in the historical printing technology. To counter the loss of skill existing knowledge to transfer and document the material and immaterial inheritance necessary.*

A hot topic was that it would be more and more difficult to find good colours. What is the future for these? Jürgen Zeidler has machines and recipes. But it will be very expensive to make colours to sell.

We need recipes, especially for those that were used in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Senefelder Foundation will act as a bank of knowledge.

Group 2.

*The artistic lithography uses possibilities of impression in link with experimental and creative techniques. Their goal is not in the professional duplication of templates, but in the creative process to produce art. Since these artistic processes are an important one further development of lithography, are transfer and documentation of these artistic processes. Hur skall vi dela med oss av nödvändig kunskap och entusiasmen för att arbeta på sten.*

The lithographic technique must be in contact with the contemporary artistic field.

Lithography is leaving the stone. We must bring it back to the stone.

Group 3.

*The value of original printing techniques is currently too low on market rated. Although the production of a lithography both professional and temporal requires a higher effort than for other artistic techniques, the counter value is not generally perceived. It is necessary, artisans, collectors, museums, gallery owners and critics convince that hand prints of lithographs in small edition as originals to be displayed.*

The interest of the collectors must be encouraged.

Originals are production; reproductions are technique.

Grupp 4.

Although most lithography workshops know of other facilities and some meetings have been *held, is a network of all worldwide activities necessary. It should be possible, that in a network exchange, cooperation and information will be better.*

Meetings in networks. Strengthen the interest of the market for lithography.

Create platforms.

Better knowledge of lithography/stone printing in the art world.

Networks for lithographic print shops to propagate knowledge.

Assistance to the lithographic print shops to sell.

Video documentation.

Next colloquium will be in 2019 or 2020.

We participants should think of what we will that ISS should do.

/Jan af Burén