

NEWS

from the Worcester Art Museum

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WORCESTER ART MUSEUM LITHOGRAPHY EXHIBITION EXAMINES METHODS AND HISTORY OF ART FORM

(WORCESTER, MASS., May 16, 2005) — Lithography may translate literally as “stone writing,” but it is a technology, hardly written in stone, has evolved since its eighteenth-century invention. The Worcester Art Museum explores lithography and its development in an exhibition on view through July 31, 2005.

Using fine examples and technical materials drawn from the permanent collection of the Worcester Art Museum, the exhibition will explain the principles and procedures of lithography, and chart its history from its inception in Germany, to its basis as the foundation for modern production printing. To teach the viewer to recognize and understand various techniques of lithography, photomicrographs provide enlarged areas of a selection of the works on view. These images, and written explanations are also provided in a free illustrated exhibition brochure.

Unlike other traditional printing processes, which offset an image from ink deposited on the protrusions or hollows in a printing surface, lithography transfers an image from the chemical deposits on a flat plane. Simply put, the artist draws an image in greasy ink on a polished slab of limestone. The craftsman flushes the stone with water, which soaks into its unsealed surfaces. Oil-based printing ink is then rolled on the stone, where it sticks to the tacky drawing but is repelled from the wet areas. The printer lays the paper over the inked image, and pulls the stone through a printing press, transferring its design to the sheet.

The exhibition includes examples from the first years of lithography, including prints by Alois Senefelder, who invented the process during the 1790s, as well as the work of pioneer lithographers Charles Lasteyrie and Godefroy Engelmann. Other artists featured include European Masters Francisco Goya and Eugene Delacroix, nineteenth-century lithographers like Honoré Daumier and James McNeill Whistler, and modern artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg.

The show demonstrates different lithography techniques, among them pen and crayon lithographs; lithotint, in which diluted tusche washes are used to create the appearance of ink- or watercolor-washes; scratching, in which white lines and accents are carved into previously applied crayon or tusche; and spatter, which employs a fine pattern of inky dots.

Printmaking Methods/Lithography is one of an occasional series to explore printmaking methods. Future exhibitions at the Worcester Art Museum will delve into stencil and screen prints.

About the Worcester Art Museum

The Worcester Art Museum, which opened to the public in 1898, is world-renowned for its 35,000-piece collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings and new media. The works span 5,000 years of art and culture, ranging from ancient Roman mosaics to Colonial silver, Impressionist paintings and contemporary art. Dedicated to the promotion of art and art education, the Museum offers a year-round studio art and art appreciation program that enrolls over 6,000 adult and youth students each year. Public tours are offered Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m., September through May. Audio tours are also available in English and Spanish.

Museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. (evening hours sponsored by Commerce Bank), and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors and full-time college students with current ID, and FREE for Members and all youth 17 and under. Admission is also FREE for everyone on Saturday mornings, 10 a.m.-noon (sponsored by The TJX Companies, Inc. and Massachusetts Electric, a National Grid Company). The Museum is located at 55 Salisbury St., Worcester, Mass., easily accessible from the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), Route 290 and Route 9. Free parking is available near entrances on Salisbury, Lancaster and Tuckerman streets. For more information, call (508) 799-4406 or visit the Museum web site at www.worcesterart.org.

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