



The Library Company OF PHILADELPHIA

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**LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA DISPLAYS A NEW EXHIBITON: *PHILADELPHIA ON STONE: THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF COMMERCIAL LITHOGRAPHY IN PHILADELPHIA, 1828-1878***

**Philadelphia: January 22, 2010** — Lithography was the first new printmaking process to be invented in 300 years when about 1798 Bavarian playwright turned amateur printer Alois Senefelder (1771-1834), in a quest for a more cost-effective and efficient printing method than engraving, perfected his flat-surface printing technique on stone. His new technique, which Senefelder called “Chemical Printing,” was based on the mutual repulsion of water and grease. Following years of experimentation in the United States Philadelphia artist Bass Otis

produced the first American lithograph when he drew a quaint view of a millhouse on a lithographic stone that he successfully printed and then published in the *Analectic Magazine* in July 1819. Within the ensuing decade commercial lithographic establishments emerged in New York,

Washington, D.C, and Boston, and finally in 1828 in Philadelphia, when looking glass and print store proprietors Kennedy & Lucas established their lithographic printing shop Lithography transformed the printed landscape of the city and gave rise to a popular visual culture that continues to influence American society today. It was the first cost-effective method for printing in color, allowed long print runs and larger sizes, and facilitated design innovation for the use of text with images. As part of its three-year, grant funded project exploring the first fifty years of commercial lithography in the city, the Library Company welcomes you to the new exhibition

***Philadelphia on Stone: The First Fifty Years of Commercial Lithography in Philadelphia, 1828-1878,***



Christian Schussele, *Chromo Lithography* (Philadelphia: P.S. Duval, 1850). Chromolithograph. Library Company of Philadelphia.



Detail from E. Luders, *Goodyears Rubber, Packing & Belting Company* (Philadelphia: Lithy. of A. Kollner, ca. 1856). Chromolithograph, with hand-coloring. Library Company of Philadelphia.

which opens on March 18.

***Philadelphia on Stone***, generously funded by the William Penn Foundation, explores the history of 19th-century Philadelphia lithography and its impact on contemporary visual culture. The exhibition explicates the history and process of lithography, documents the professional and personal lives of premier and journeymen lithographers, and

includes lithographs from the collections of the Library Company and several other institutions whose collections were surveyed. “Philadelphia lithographers affected our literal and figurative view of the city during the 19th century,” states Project Director and curator Erika Piola. “The speedy production and the variety of imagery allowed by lithography changed the conception, content, and consumption of prints produced for the commercial and domestic consumer in Philadelphia. The illustrated billheads used in Chestnut Street offices, the framed cityscape views that adorned Rittenhouse Square parlors, and the lively advertisements circulated for downtown stores recorded and exemplified the city’s physical and cultural transformation from a seaport into an urban center.” Included in the exhibition are the first American lithograph; works printed by P. S. Duval, the “Father of Philadelphia lithography”; advertisements showing the businesses of yesteryear, including the Goodyear’s Rubber, Packing & Belting Company; and lithographs with commercial graphic designs not unlike those still in use today. In addition, the work of contemporary lithographers Kip Deeds and Roberta Delaney will be on display to represent the continuing influence of this trade on the printed arts.

***Philadelphia on Stone*** will be on display at the Library Company from March 18 to October 15. Our gallery is

free and open to the public from 9:00 a.m.- 4:45 p.m. on weekdays.

Join us for the exhibition opening on Thursday, March 25 at 6:00 p.m.

featuring Nancy Finlay, editor of *Picturing Victorian America:*

*Prints by the Kellogg Brothers of Hartford, 1830-1880* and Curator

of Graphics at the Connecticut Historical Society. *Please*

*RSVP to this event by emailing [lpropst@librarycompany.org](mailto:lpropst@librarycompany.org) or calling 215-546-3181.*

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John Caspar Wild, *Panorama of Philadelphia from the State House steeple. East* (Philadelphia: [J.T. Bowen], 1838). Lithograph. Library Company of Philadelphia.

***Philadelphia on Stone*** is an *Independent Project* of Philagrafika 2010,

Philadelphia’s international festival celebrating print in contemporary art.

## Background Information about the Library Company

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library concentrating on American history and culture from the 17th through 19th centuries. Free and open to the public, the Library Company houses an extensive non-circulating collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera and works of art. The mission of the Library Company is to preserve, interpret, make available, and augment the valuable materials within our care. We serve a diverse constituency throughout Philadelphia and the nation, offering comprehensive reader services, an internationally renowned fellowship program, an online public access catalog, and regular exhibitions and public programs. Located at 1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, it is open to the public free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Library Company can be found online at [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org).