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The Print Center 2000 Long Range Strategic Plan

THE PRINT CENTER 2000 LONG RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

The Print Center's Strategic Planning Committee for 2000 consisted of a group of members of the Board of Governors and staff. The purpose of the committee was to consider The Print Center's current long-range plan and to develop specific goals and implementation strategies to assure The Print Center's continued vitality during the next few years.

The Strategic Planning Committee met on numerous occasions from June to September. Participating in the Strategic Planning process were Board members: Jeffrey Cooper, Louise Curl Adams, Joan Curran, Lauri Strimkovsky, Tom Scurria, David Jefferys, Kate Ware and Carol Moore; and staff members Christine Filippone, Sue White and Jacqueline van Rhyn. Additionally, William Holmes, a volunteer with Business Volunteers for the Arts served as a facilitator to the Committee.

The Strategic Planning process included wide ranging discussions regarding The Print Center's mission, its current and prospective audiences, and its current and prospective programs. The Committee reviewed The Print Center's mission statement, its budgeting and other financial processes, its position in the local and national arts community, and discussed future expectations.

II. HISTORY OF THE PRINT CENTER

The Print Center has a rich and interesting history which can be used to help position The Print Center to achieve both short-term and long-term goals.

In 1915, at a time when few other venues in this country were dedicated to the appreciation of prints, The Print Club was founded for the “dissemination, study, production, and collection of works by printmakers, American and foreign.” In 1996 The Print Club changed its name to The Print Center to mark its commitment to serve both its members and the general public. More than 85 years after its founding, The Print Center is still guided by its original mission and has expanded upon it to include photography and all forms of the printed image. From its beginning, The Print Center has always been a meeting place where printmakers, photographers, scholars and collectors alike could freely exchange ideas about their shared interests. The first meetings were held in members’ homes and expanded in 1927 to the present facility at 1614 Latimer Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Staging its first competitive juried exhibition in 1924, The Print Center continues to maintain an international reputation for its annual international competition, the oldest of its kind in the country. Today the competition attracts entries from across the United States, Asia, Europe, and South America, as well as from the local arts community, with prizes awarded to both established and emerging artists – for whom a Print Center prize is often their first major recognition. Photography exhibitions began in 1962, enlarging The Print Center’s mission to feature printed works in all media. Today, The Print Center Annual International Competition alternates annually between printmaking and photography. For each competition a new juror (curator, artist, or critic) is selected. This invitational format supports The Print Center’s

endorsement to maintain an open dialogue between emerging artists and established figures in the arts.

In addition to the annual competition, The Print Center organizes nine to twelve solo and group exhibitions each year. Exhibitions foster an appreciation and understanding of the rich heritage of printmaking and photography while also exploring the influence of new technologies in the field. One of The Print Center's recent successes as a platform for introducing innovative approaches in printmaking materialized in the fall of 1999 with the exhibition *The Digital Press: Artists Exploring New Technologies*. On view were prints by nine nationally and regionally recognized artists whose work investigated a variety of creative digital printing techniques. In conjunction with the exhibition, The Print Center held a panel discussion entitled *Artists in Cybertech: Issues and Advances in Digital Printing* at which artists and educators in the forefront of the field discussed various options available today for artists making digital prints.

Solo and group exhibitions at The Print Center reflect the breadth of activity in contemporary printmaking and photography. In addition to introducing work by emerging artists, The Print Center curates shows of work by printmakers and photographers who have greatly contributed to their fields. During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, for example, The Print Center exhibited work by R.P. Kitaj, Peter Milton, Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, Roy Lichtenstein, William Wege, Imogen Cunningham, Martha Zeit, Kara Walker, Norinne Betjemann and Jerry Uelsmann.

The Print Center also presents the work of regional artists. Special exhibitions devoted to artists affiliated with Philadelphia began with an exhibition of prints by Joseph Pennell in 1926, followed by other artists acclaimed for innovations in printmaking and

photography, including Mary Cassatt, Dox Thrash, Eugene Feldman, and more recently Jerry Kaplan, and Ernestine Ruben.

The Print Center enjoys a long tradition of introducing and exhibiting work by international artists to American audiences. An exhibition of Polish graphic art in 1929 set the stage for two later exhibitions devoted to prints by Swedish and Danish artists. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, a time when there was an influx of successful and influential European artists in the United States, The Print Center organized landmark exhibitions introducing the prints of major European painters and sculptors: Miro', Picasso, Rouault, Marini, Giacometti, and Moore to postwar American audiences.

The Print Center initiates traveling exhibitions of contemporary prints and photographs to national and international venues. Building on its history, The Print Center organized the *International Mezzotint Exhibition* in 1984 and *Contemporary Prints from Latvia and Bulgaria* in 1996. *Fourteen Korean Printmakers* was held at The Print Center in 1998 which will culminate in an exhibition of work by Philadelphia printmakers in Seoul in 2002.

Printmakers of outstanding reputation have worked with The Print Center to provide creative exchanges among artists. As early as 1944, American artist Stanley William Hayter brought to the United States from France the concept of the artists' atelier and instituted *The Print Club Workshop* at The Print Center, where artists could make prints with the help of a trained printer. Distinguished printmakers including Adja Yunkers, Leonard Baskin, Asger Jorn, Misch Kohn and Louis Shanker were invited to lead workshops and teach others their unique printmaking techniques. During the 1950s the activities of *The Print Club Workshop* and *Atelier 17* in New York (also established by Hayter) helped start the independent print workshop movement in the United States, decisively transforming American printmaking practices.

Over the last eight decades, The Print Center has continued to commission works from an international roster of printmakers, including Norman Ackroyd, Antonio Frasconi, Valerie Thornton and Paul Wunderlich whose prints were sold by The Print Center Gallery Store. Continuing the tradition of publishing prints, The Print Center established a collaborative printmaking project called *The Print Club Residency Series* (1988-1991). Four artists, Robert Cumming, Winifred Lutz, Art Spiegelman and Lois Lane, were invited to work (unrestricted) for one month with two Philadelphia master printers, Timothy Sheesley and Shigemitsu Tsukaguchi. The prints produced by these artists were featured in *Crossing Over/ Changing Places*, an exhibition that illuminated the dynamics of collaborative workshop production. The consortium members included the Lower East Side Printshop in New York, Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper in New Jersey; and Pyramid Atlantic in Maryland. The exhibition traveled for five years throughout the United States and in Eastern Europe under the auspices of the United States Information Agency (USIA) with the final venue at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

The Print Center has a significant history of successful outreach programs to involve artists and the community. *Prints in Progress*, a project designed in 1960 to bring printmaking demonstrations to area schools, met with such success that in 1970 it became a free-standing organization of continuing vitality. Similarly, beginning in 1989, the portfolio project *25 x 25* was open to all artists without curatorial restrictions. A total of twenty-five portfolios of prints and photographs have featured the work of some three hundred locally and nationally-known artists. *25 x 25* portfolios have been exhibited throughout the city, in addition to The Print Center Gallery Store. Other programming has included a four-part Collector's Series; Open Houses at printers' studios as part of artist residencies; workshops including "Getting

Known/Being Shown,” for photographers; and workshops for art educators. The current *Print Center Series* encompasses a wide range of offerings: lectures by exhibiting artists, jurors or curators; tours of artists’ studios; workshops for and by artists; and The Print Center Salon an opportunity for local artists to present their portfolios and engage in an open dialogue with a guest curator, critic or established artist.

Print Center publications and prizewinning prints from juried competitions are housed in The Print Center’s Permanent Collection established at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1942. (Other archives documenting the activities of The Print Center are housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and are available to the public.) Now numbering over 1,000 prints and growing annually, the collection also includes masterworks by historic and modern printmakers and photographers from Albrecht Durer to Jasper Johns. Over the past fifty-eight years, The Print Center Collection has been continually augmented through artists-in-residence works and purchase awards donated by Print Center supporters. The collection is actively used by students and scholars and is also used for thematic exhibits and loans to other museums. In 1997, the exhibition *Prized Impressions: Gifts from The Print Center of Philadelphia* held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, presented works from The Print Center’s collection and was accompanied by a brochure. One of the special events related to the exhibition included a slide lecture on the historic significance of exhibitions at The Print Center presented by David Kiehl, Curator of Prints at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Since 1915, The Print Center has sustained a rich tradition of exhibitions and related programs that reflect the organization’s dedication to the printed image. The Print Center’s long history also reveals its ability to explore the changing role of printmaking and

photography in our culture and adapt to technological advancements. It is this open-mindedness which will keep The Print Center a competitive and vital forum for artists and the community.

III. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE PRINT CENTER'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO ITS MISSION

After much discussion, the Committee concluded that the current mission statement continues to properly define The Print Center's goals:

The Print Center's mission is to support printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encourage the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms.

The Print Center's mission is currently carried out in the following ways:

1. Exhibition space. The Print Center's exhibition space at 1614 Latimer Street provides a venue for a variety of solo and group exhibitions. The Annual International Competition, alternating each year between printmaking and photography, provides an opportunity for artists from around the world to have work viewed by an established professional in the field and, if selected, exhibited and documented in a full color catalogue. The gallery space is also the venue for frequent international exchange exhibitions, for the original presentation of traveling exhibitions initiated by The Print Center, and for The Print Center's series of solo and group exhibitions involving well-known and emerging artists using both traditional and innovative processes. The Print Center is now better able to present high quality exhibitions and related educational programming due to the recent addition of a fulltime curator to the staff.
2. Educational programs and professional collaborations. The Print Center's programs have reached into the community to engage artists, collectors, students of all ages, and the general public in printmaking and photography. Introduced in January, 1999, *The Print Center Series* is an exciting continuing education program designed to: provide artists with an affordable opportunity to learn about new and ever-changing technologies, processes, and materials; and to educate the community in the processes and technologies of printmaking and photography by offering hands-

on, interactive workshops given by local and regional artists. Recent *Print Center Series* programs include studio visits to the workplaces of established local artists working in photo-based media, a panel discussion entitled *Artists in Cybertech: Issues and Advances in Digital Printing*, and workshops in papermaking, printmaking, and bookmaking for community members with over 500 participants, and a performance by the Guerrilla Girls held in concert with the Republican National Convention called **Girls On Politics: Posters by the Guerrilla Girls** attended by over 250 people. The Print Center Salon is an opportunity for printmakers and photographers to participate in an open dialogue and informal critique led by a different art professional each month. Recent Salon guests include Ron Tarver, photographer for the Philadelphia Inquirer; Lisa Melandri, curator of the Levy Gallery at Moore College of Art and Design; and Judith Thorpe, Associate Dean and Professor of Photography, Tyler School of Art.

3. Support and opportunities for emerging artists. The Print Center offers the work of exhibiting artists and artists in The Print Center Gallery Store for sale to collectors, curators, art dealers, designers, architectural firms, and the general public. The public and press are made aware of exhibiting artists' work through press releases and announcement cards sent to our international mailing list and by reproductions of work shown on our website and in our newsletter. The inventory in the Gallery Store is comprised of prints and photographs by over one hundred artists from around the world ranging from well-known artists such as Neil Welliver, Helen Frankenthaler, and Sol Lewitt to emerging artists many of whom have not yet had their first solo exhibition. Through promotion of prints and photographs for sale, many artists have been able to reach buyers who would otherwise be unaware of their work.
4. Information resource. The Print Center serves as an information resource for artists and the community through its recently revived newsletter "Newsprint" which features articles and

listings of opportunities for artists. The Print Center also provides information to the community through its website, www.printcenter.org. The website provides information regarding The Print Center's current activities and includes information regarding exhibition and educational opportunities for artists.

IV. THE PRINT CENTER: THE FUTURE

The Print Center faces many opportunities and challenges at the beginning of the 21st Century. Developments in printmaking and photographic techniques, audience interest and demographics, and the fundraising environment each require innovative thinking to assure that The Print Center maximizes its future potential.

The advent of computer technology and digital processes has been rapid and dramatic in the last 10 years. The Print Center has been particularly sensitive to innovations in technology and techniques and has been expansive in its definition of "the printed image." As digital processes are improved and refined and new techniques developed, The Print Center must continue to welcome artists expressing themselves using new media, while affording proper recognition to historic precedents and to contemporary artists using traditional processes. The challenge is to assure broad-based representation among artists on The Print Center Board of Governors so that The Print Center's vision remains inclusive and does not become identified with any particular "school of thought" or technique. The opportunity is to provide an environment in which artists, collectors, and the community can learn about and experience the printed image in its broadest definition.

The Print Center must also focus on the demographics of its audience and supporters. As a Center City Philadelphia cultural institution, The Print Center should appeal to the established residential Center City community. On the other hand, a younger group of artists and visitors is more likely to be interested in the innovative programming offered by The Print Center. The challenge is to find a way to offer opportunities to both ends of the demographic

spectrum. There is an opportunity to open new sources of financial support by offering enriching artistic opportunities for the more established end of the client base, while continuing to offer challenging and exciting programs for college students, emerging artists, and young professionals, enabling the two groups to engage each other to the mutual benefit of each.

The environment for financial support is also changing. Traditional foundation sources have become less reliable as foundations have more narrowly focused their grant-making activities and funding criteria have become more difficult to meet. The Print Center needs to develop new sources of financial support while broadening and deepening the support it currently receives from individual donors and family foundations. The flexibility from such sources should provide The Print Center with a greater ability to fund its programs and meet the needs of its members and audience. The Print Center must find ways to reach these funding sources through financial planners and money managers.

A strong Board of Governors continues to be necessary to assure leadership and management as the environment in which The Print Center functions continues to change.

V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR 2000 AND BEYOND

The strategic plan focused on goals in four main areas: financial health and stability, effective board leadership, development, and enhanced national and international visibility of The Print Center.

A. More Effective Board and Committee Leadership.

In the past decade, The Print Center Board of Governors has evolved from a “hands-off” Board to one with members applying specific skills to specific functions. Members of the Board are more directly involved in the organization and they come from more diverse sectors of the community. We have, however, achieved this desired result without formal process. We must implement a more professional process of Board recruitment which will build a Board equipped to help The Print Center grow financially. We must make our expectations clear and provide appropriate direction to new Board members. Board members, in turn, will be held accountable for meeting these mutually agreed upon expectations.

Objective 1: Develop Board responsibility contract to include expectations, formal notices, committee descriptions, and develop a Board orientation process.

Persons responsible: Christine Filippone, Executive Director and Jeff Cooper, Co-President.

Expected date of completion: October 15, 2000.

Measurement criteria: adoption and dissemination of a Board contract, full participation at Board and committee meetings, and Board appearances at Print Center events.

Objective 2: Board orientation process.

Person responsible: Christine Filippone with Jeff Cooper.

Expected date of completion: November 1, 2000.

Measurement criteria: implementation of a formal Board orientation process and an annual evaluation of Board members.

Objective 3: Formalized function of Executive Committee.

Persons responsible: Members of the Executive Committee: Jeff Cooper; Louise Curl Adams, Co-President; Lauri Strimkovsky, Treasurer; Smokie Kittner, Secretary; Hester Stinnett, Programming Committee Chair; David Jefferys, Marketing Committee Chair; Sue Wiggins, Gallery Store Committee Chair.

Expected date of completion: Fall, 2000.

Measurement criteria: Attendance of all officers and committee chairs or designees at Board and Executive Committee meetings.

Objective 4: Create Nominating Committee.

Persons responsible: Executive Committee with full Board of Governors.

Expected date of completion: January, 2001.

Measurement criteria: Creation of Nominating Committee.

B. Create Development Plan.

The Print Center recognizes a need for a structured and effective development plan. The Print Center has survived on sporadic and unpredictable grants from foundations and individuals. The Print Center needs to assure consistent and reliable sources of repetitive income to realize greater stability and to effectively expand our programming. The need for an effective

development plan is highlighted by the obligation to assure a continuing funding source for the position of curator. Approximately \$40,000 must be added to The Print Center's income each year to fund this position.

Objective 1: Develop strategies for implementing Strategic Plan/write draft of Development Plan.

Persons responsible: Development Committee.

Expected date of completion: Winter, 2001.

Measurement criteria: Development of a plan to identify funding sources in order to raise an additional \$40,000 to fund the curator position.

Objective 2: Develop additional sources of ongoing funding.

Persons responsible: Development Committee and Christine Filippone.

Expected date of completion: Winter, 2001.

Measurement criteria: Procurement of ongoing funds needed to support the position of Curator.

C. Financial Health and Stability.

As indicated in Section IV, The Print Center faces an ever-changing environment in the area of charitable philanthropy. Although The Print Center has managed to "balance its budget" in the past, its ability to accomplish the goals and objectives of the current strategic plan will depend significantly on its ability to manage its financial resources in the most efficient and effective manner. Consequently, the Strategic Planning Committee believes that a major objective of this strategic plan is to significantly strengthen the financial management component of the organization by accomplishing the following goals and objectives:

Objective 1: Create Finance Committee.

Persons responsible: Executive Committee with full Board of Governors.

Expected date of completion: October 1, 2000.

Measurement criteria: establishment of a formalized budgeting process by December, 2000 and creation and approval of a long-term financial plan by May, 2001.

Objective 2: Implement Development/Financial Plan

Persons responsible: Finance Committee.

Measurement criteria: completion of plan by FY 2002.

Objective 3: Fund Curator Position

Persons responsible: Development Committee and Finance Committee.

Measurement criteria: Funding of the curator position on an annual basis.

D. Increase Local, National, and International Awareness of The Print Center.

Awareness of The Print Center's programs among the broader community has dwindled in recent decades and the arts community does not perceive The Print Center to be as vital as it once was. The Print Center seeks to be on the "Art Radar." Loosely defined, we seek to be recognized as a leader in the fields of printmaking and photography nationally and internationally and an integral part of the local cultural community. We feel this may be accomplished through an assessment / survey of artist members' satisfaction with current programs, increased quality of exhibitions and related educational programming provided by the new curator, and by reaching out nationally and locally to a broader community to garner support for our programs and rejuvenating appreciation for the printed image.

Objective 1: Build and diversify audience.

Persons responsible: Christine Filippone and Marketing Committee.

Expected date of completion: 2001.

Measurement criteria: increase in patron and benefactor level members by 10% per year and to increase contributor members by 20% per year.

Objective 2: Increase Major Funding Sources.

Persons responsible: Christine Filippone and Committee Chairs.

Expected date of completion: 2001.

Measurement criteria: Identification of additional foundations, corporations, and major individual donors who can provide substantial new funds to support The Print Center's programs.

Objective 3: Develop relationships with recognized artists.

Persons responsible: Programming Committee and Curator.

Expected date of completion: 2001.

Measurement criteria: Creation of international target list of 25 artists from a variety of disciplines and create an Honorary Artists Circle to help gain recognition for The Print Center.