

# ICA's Print Center makes a good impression for everyone

By HEATHER ZIMMERMAN

The San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art is helping local artists and others with a creative spark to literally make their mark.

The Print Center at the ICA, which opened after the institute moved to a larger space in San Jose's SoFA district in 2006, is a printmaking facility open to artists and the public at large. The Print Center offers printmaking workshops for all levels and studio access, which includes all necessary printing supplies.

"We have everything here. People can walk in here empty-handed, just with their creative brain and an idea or just the desire to do something and everything's here," says ICA Print Center director Fanny Retsek.

Visitors can learn about the ICA's Print Center, and see what types of prints can be made there during the next installment of the ICA's monthly Talking Art series on April 9, 6-9 p.m. The talk, "Printmaking Today," will include insights from Bay Area printmakers and explore the ever-growing art form of printmaking. Prior to the talk, guests can watch artists demonstrate different processes.

"Printmaking Today" takes place at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, 560 S. First St., San Jose.

The Print Center has the equipment and supplies to produce intaglio, photopolymer intaglio and monotype prints. Retsek notes that the press, inks and tools used in monotype and intaglio printing are the same.

The center recently added a large-scale Epson ink-jet printer and computer station for digital printmaking. Workshops are offered in all types of printing available at the Print Center.

It was, in part, the ICA's strong association with the monotype print that helped bring about the Print Center. This year will mark the 15th anniversary of the ICA's Monotype Marathon fundraiser, in which local artists make monotypes for an auction.

"Through this printmaking event, we developed a large far-reaching community of printmakers who are connected to the ICA from Carmel to Sonoma—artists who would come to this event as well as an audience of art viewers

and collectors who are educated in the idea of what an original fine-art print is," Retsek says. "And people loved it."

As the ICA was preparing for its 2006 move, the organization planned to add an educational component to its new digs and found, after conducting a study, that there was great desire for printmaking facilities.

Intaglio and photopolymer intaglio both employ the etching of a design into a plate, which is then



Photograph courtesy of the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art

**An etched copper plate is used to make an intaglio print at the ICA Print Center.**

inked and run through a press. To create a monotype, an artist paints a design directly onto a plate before putting it in the press.

Because inking a monotype plate is basically the same as drawing or painting, the process is accessible to beginners. "It is a really great jumping-off point for all kinds of printmaking," Retsek says. "It's something that anybody could do in two hours—you could get started in two hours."

In fact, Retsek and Print Center staff teach monotype printing at printmaking parties that have become increasingly popular recently at the ICA. "We're being contacted by companies for team-building exercises," says Maureen Cappon-Javey, ICA marketing and communications associate. "We're getting groups of people who are interested in coming in and doing an art project together. It's a great environment for groups to get together, and bond and be creative."

Often, beginners who have attended a printmaking party or workshop will return for more classes. Artists who are looking to brush up a skill or learn a new technique also attend Print Center classes.

After certification by the ICA,

newer and more established printmakers alike can work on their own during the Print Center's open access hours, which make available the print facility and all its supplies for studio time. Printmakers pay an hourly fee, plus the cost of supplies, although they may also bring their own.

San Jose artist Sieglinde van Damme uses the open access hours regularly after taking several classes in photopolymer printing. Van Damme is a video artist who creates prints of stills from her work. She came to the Print Center looking for a new, more economically feasible way to produce her stills. "It has changed my work in a different direction," van Damme says of working at the Print Center. "Learning this technique made me be able to continue the production of my video stills, though in a different way."

She started to work with photopolymer printing because it's one of the only printing processes that allows the printmaker to start with a digital image. And the hands-on aspect of printing has definite appeal. "Although I'm a video artist, which is very much computer work, I still love working with my hands. I thought it was great that I could combine both of those aspects."

*Talking Art admission for non-members is \$5. For information about workshops or open access hours, call 408.283.8155 or visit [www.sjica.org](http://www.sjica.org).*

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