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Group aims to expand city's printmaking art scene

By DOUGLAS BRITT Copyright 2009 Houston Chronicle

Oct. 9, 2009, 4:22PM



PrintMatters

Vivian Hordes' *Totem* (2009) will be on display at the Paper & Ink exhibit.

Paper & Ink, an exhibit at the Museum of Printing History, features original and mixed-media prints by Andis Applewhite, Vivian Hordes, Ann Johnson, Cathie Kayser and Ruth Shouval, the founding members of PrintMatters, a new arts organization.

Hordes discussed the group's origins.



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Q: You're starting an arts organization in the middle of the worst economic climate since the Great Depression. I imagine many people wonder: What the heck were you thinking?

A: I think it's an exciting time even though the economy is not good. I don't think that's a deterrent for us.

I think there's a real vacuum here in Houston as far as a vibrant printmaking art scene. In Austin, they have Flatbed Press, and there's a large printmaking community.

In San Antonio, there's StoneMetal Press, and they have a big community that's supportive of printmaking. Having been members of Women Printmakers of Austin for several years, we were aware that there's just an absence of any kind of vibrant printmaking art scene here in Houston, and we decided it was time to establish an organization here.

Q: What are your goals?

A: Our primary goal is to promote traditional and nontraditional printmaking and to expand the Houston market of print collectors and promote the growth of our members. I think that artists that use not only traditional, but nontraditional printmaking techniques are under-represented in the local gallery shows here.

Q: What do you attribute the under-representation to? I take it you don't think it's that artists aren't doing printmaking here so

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much as that we're not seeing their work in galleries very often.

A: I think that galleries, a lot of times they just assume that a print won't bring as much money as a painting.

Now, what's happened with printmaking is it's just exploded into more multimedia types of processes where something can be stamped and printed in nontraditional ways. It's just exciting.

Gone are the days where you'd just make an edition of something and repeat the same image over and over again.

I think there needs to be some kind of education on what's going on right now as far as the expansion and growth of nontraditional printmaking techniques. So what we're going to do is sponsor a juried annual membership show, and we're going to serve as a resource for printmaking information and exhibition opportunities.

We're going to have a quarterly newsletter and Web site — www.printmattershouston.org — and we're going to encourage collaboration and networking and dialogue among members.

Q: How do people become members?

A: Our membership is going to be based on artistic merit, so they would submit a portfolio of work.

There will be a membership fee of \$35 a year, so they would fill out a membership form, which we're going to have at the exhibit, along with their artist statement and a CD of about 10 high-resolution images of their work.

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