



*Contemporary Images
in Print since 1915*

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***The Print Center Receives Largest Grant in its 86 Year History
from Pew: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative***

PHILADELPHIA, - The Print Center announces the receipt of a \$181,516 grant from Pew Charitable Trusts: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative (PEI) to fund IMPRINT – Philadelphia’s first major billboard exhibition. This grant is more than twice as large as any The Print Center has received in its 86 year history. Only four organizations in Philadelphia received a PEI grant for an exhibition this year.

The Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative (PEI), funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and administered by The University of the Arts, was established in 1997 to stimulate artistic development in the Philadelphia-area visual arts community by supporting public exhibitions and accompanying publications of cultural significance and high artistic calibre. On April 30, 2001, PEI awarded \$733,861 in exhibition grants to only four Philadelphia-area arts organizations: Philadelphia Museum of Art, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia University’s Paley Design Center and The Print Center. “We are thrilled to be in the company of such distinguished arts organizations!” exclaimed Print Center Executive Director, Christine Filippone.

Curated by Print Center Board member, Joan Wadleigh Curran, IMPRINT is a public art project that uses the flexibility of print media to address issues relevant to contemporary urban life. The project includes two components: a gallery exhibition and a public art project. Six artists of national and regional stature have been selected to create work that uses the technological advances of printmaking and photography to saturate the city of Philadelphia with images that initiate a conversation with the public about issues pertinent to the public dialogue: aging, race and ethnicity, gender and class. “This prestigious grant will enable us to expand the definition and function of the printed image by bringing it beyond its traditional gallery confines and into a broader public forum.” explained Filippone.

Ed. Note: Print Center staff and artists participating in IMPRINT are available for interviews. Billboard art is available for preview.

Founded in 1915, as The Print Club, The Print Center's mission is to *support printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and to encourage the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms.* The Print Center holds approximately 11 exhibitions annually, offers mentoring opportunities for artists, and original artwork for sale in the Print Center Gallery Store. Membership numbers more than 1,500.

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The Pew Charitable Trusts supports nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy and religion. Based in Philadelphia, the Trusts make strategic investments to help organizations and citizens develop practical solutions to difficult problems.

Philadelphia is one of few major US cities which has not yet staged a major billboard exhibition. The concept of IMPRINT comes directly from its definition. *IMPRINT is the act of making an indelible impression on the senses and the mind.* In addition to six artist billboards situated along major highways and more than 30 smaller billboards, bus shelters and mall kiosks, IMPRINT will extend to two other venues traditionally used for advertising: paper coffee cups (one per artist) which will be distributed throughout Philadelphia, and 6 newspaper inserts, to appear serially, in a weekly city newspaper. IMPRINT will engage an entirely new audience within the greater Philadelphia area including ethnically diverse communities, often under-served by area arts institutions.

The six artists selected to participate in IMPRINT each uses printmaking or photographic processes in their work: Kerry James Marshall, Dotty Attie and John Coplans are internationally-known and Virgil Marti, James Mills and Susan Fenton are based in Philadelphia. Each artist's work deals with issues pertinent to the public discourse: aging, race, ethnicity, gender and class.

Traditionally, the print has served the public by bringing new ideas and information to the masses through innovative technology. IMPRINT continues this tradition by situating the works of art at unexpected sites along pathways of routine activities: commuting, buying coffee and reading newspapers. All three components of the project will culminate in an exhibition of work at The Print Center in Fall 2002.

IMPRINT is curated by Print Center Board member Joan Wadleigh Curran who will be assisted by Jacqueline van Rhyn, Curator of Prints and Photographs at The Print Center.