

in Abwesenheit gehalten von Barbara Wilhelmi

englische Übersetzung:

(Anrede)

It is exactly 200 years since Alois Senefelder published his textbook on "chemical printing" (german: Chemische Druckerey). He had spent almost 25 years since his discovery, but it was important to him that this great invention be released not in their experimental infancy, but as a professional printing technique in their future. In fact, at that time, his technique was already commercially successful in many printing companies around the world. Alois Senefelder had discovered the lithographic printing on stone in Munich through many experiments, in Offenbach he founded his first professional printing company with the music publisher André. From there, economic success began with the many possibilities of planographic printing. It is fair to say today that through lithographic printing, pictures, graphics and colorful variety have entered life since the 19th century. Not only journals, posters, art prints, sheet music and maps were printed by Stein, but advertising, packaging, labels and luxury paper has since changed the way of life.

The first 100 years of this development was an incomparably great success. However, Alois Senefelder had already recognized the advantages and disadvantages of the heavy plates from Solnhofen slate: he himself experimented on stone-like paper, because the disadvantage of the high weight of the print carrier was clear. However, the quality of the printed products could not be achieved for the time being. It took about 100 years until it was possible to achieve the planographic printing on metal plates, the offset plates. In fact, in the 20th century, offset printing prevailed among printing press manufacturers as well as large print houses. In art works and in some special applications, lithography would remain on stones. Especially the grid-free printing technique that made the stone possible was indispensable for artistic work. But also the printing of maps needed this quality. For this, further advantages of lithography were added: Firstly, it was easy to retouch the print substrates when there were geographical changes, and secondly, the dimensional stability of the stones could not be surpassed. And maps had to be absolutely true to scale.

This is also the reason why we can admire such a large number of printing plates here at the State Surveying Office. It is a stroke of luck that not only is the country depicted in this way, but a large collection of lithographic stones has been preserved.

In fact, after 200 years, the professional and economic significance of lithography has become extinct worldwide and there are hardly any professional lithographers left who have learned and practiced this work. With the last few pieces of knowledge has been lost, which was not only theoretically dominated in books, but practically and often quite emotionally by the daily work. In addition, experts treasured their highest knowledge like a professional secret. We are currently experiencing this loss in many craft techniques. Even museums can usually only preserve the material and rarely the intangible heritage.

(It is all the more important that printing techniques have been recognized as an intangible cultural heritage this year by the UNESCO).

However, lithography has undergone a wonderful change: as early as the 19th century,

lithographic printing had fascinated many artists, and by the second half of the twentieth century at the latest, more and more artists were not only designing, but also printing on stone themselves in the hand. In those years there were sometimes conflicts between the creative artists and the rather stubborn professionals: For example, Picasso at the beginning of his work on stone the famous lithographer Mourlot in Paris, which is quite forbidden. When painting the stone, no stones should touch the surface, was the answer and just the Picasso tried the same. This resulted in one of the most beautiful lithographs, the dove.

This creativity of the artists changed the techniques of lithography enormously. It can be said that with the decline of industrial printing techniques, the method of artistic lithography, as practiced today at colleges and in artists' workshops, has emerged. In contrast, the work process originating from the material is in the foreground, whereas the professional duplication and high editions appear today of little interest. Mostly the experiment is in the foreground.

"Saxa loquuntur", the stone speaks - is the motto of the lithographers. The stone makes itself what it wants, you could say. The largely unpredictability of the stones was feared by professional lithographers, and it became a principle for artists. Especially the unexpected, the surprising reaction and the characteristic peculiarities of each individual stone are the special feature of the creative process of artist lithographs. Even the rarer material - litho-ink, feather-color, leather-roller, etc. - contributes to the creation of today's lithographs.

For about 50 years, the International Senefelder Foundation has accompanied and supported this development. The Alois Senefelder Prize, which has since been awarded every five years, has been awarded to internationally important artists. All of the works submitted in these years are in their possession in Offenbach and form a significant treasure and a unique documentation of artistic creation with lithographic techniques.

Today, this probably the greatest treasure of artistic lithography in this room meets probably the greatest treasure of professional lithography. You can see a selection of works of the award winners here in the exhibition and I name just a few examples: The last winners of 2015 Alena Klatikova and Anna Trojanowska, Helga Regenstein 2002, 3 lithographs from the year 2002 by Nobuhiko Numazaki from Vienna and 3 works from 1996 by Ingrid Ledent, Mirta Domacinovic 1987, Christian Kruck 1981 and many others .....

Alois Senefelder would have great pleasure in the development of the artistic lithography and in the meeting of his two places of action Munich and Offenbach!

Thank you!