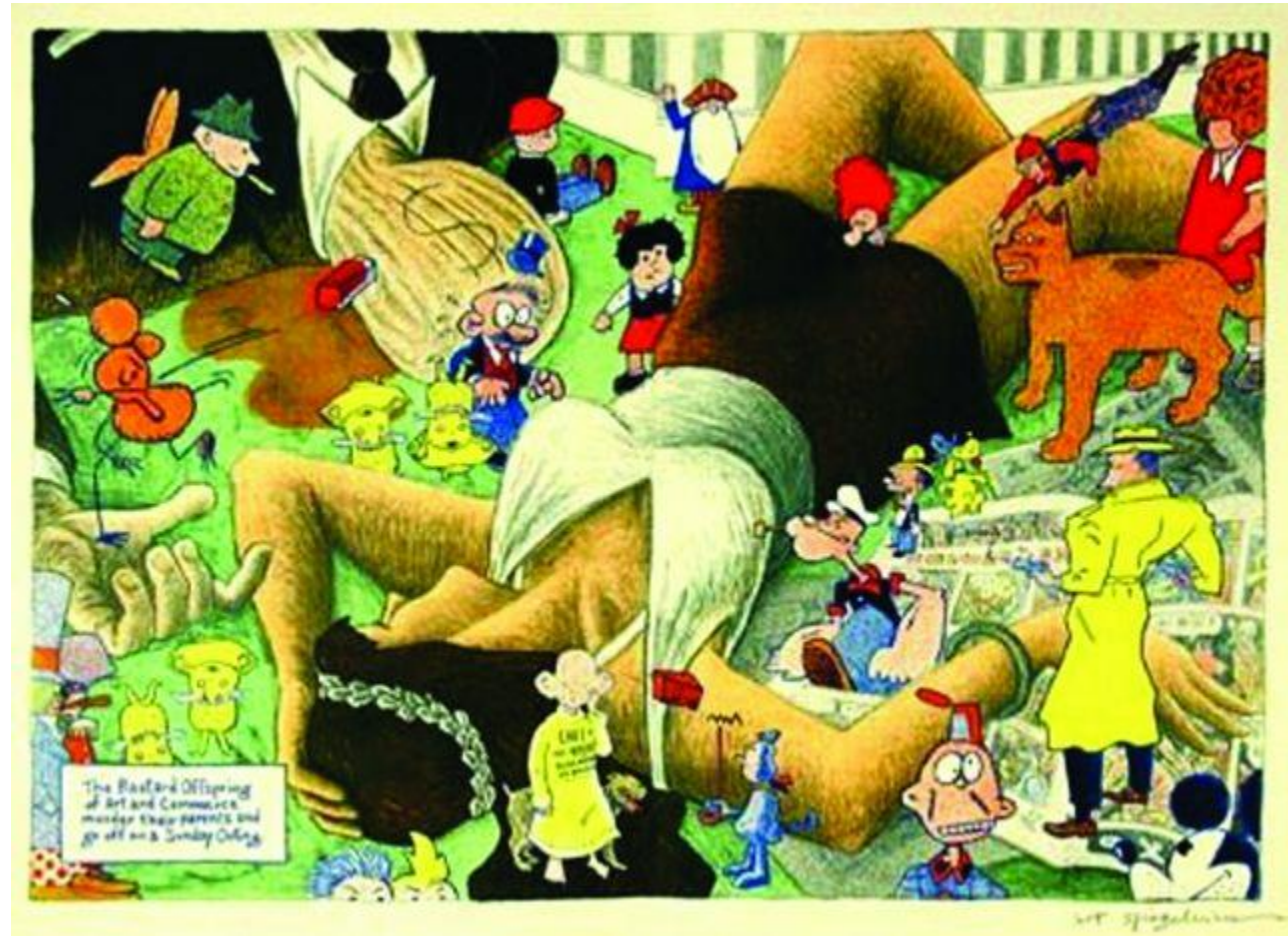


The Print Center turns 100

The Print Center celebrates its 100th anniversary with a series of exhibits and events.

By SHAUN BRADY



Art Spiegelman lithograph, published by The Print Center. *Courtesy of The Print Center*

When it was founded as The Print Club in 1915, the organization now known as The Print Center was a social club — akin to sister organizations like the Sketch Club and the Plastic Club — for printmakers and collectors.

“You used to be able to come here on Friday afternoons and have tea after the orchestra matinee,” says curator John Caperton. “The famous British artist Stanley William Hayter used to teach printmaking workshops here in the 1940s. We don’t do either of those things anymore. Even though our focus could read as narrow, printmaking is actually an extremely rich part of contemporary art and contemporary society, and we’re generating an ongoing conversation on that morphing quality.”

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The Print Center is marking its landmark anniversary with a three-part exhibition at its longtime Latimer Street home and a broader celebration in partnership with organizations and institutions throughout the city. Exhibits and events run through Dec. 19.

Exhibitions, lectures and workshops will take place at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, UArts, the Fabric Workshop & Museum, the Free Library and other locations; Mural Arts will help launch a fleet of artist-designed recycling trucks; and Brooklyn's Kayrock Industries will take over the Center's gallery store with a pop-up shop for the holidays.

In tracing the Center's rich and varied history, Caperton says, the goal was not to tell a linear story but to celebrate the diversity of work that has graced its galleries. The centerpiece show, "Highlights in History," will feature art and ephemera from throughout that first century while "Recollection" gathers a mix of work by artists who examine history through a personal lens.

"While we tend to think about history as this authoritative march down a certain path, the ways we think about history can take a lot of different directions," Caperton explains. "So rather than doing a 'greatest hits' of masterworks, we decided to pick a roster of artists who have shown here over the last 100 years who explore history in very personal ways."

No nostalgia here

The final piece of the 100th anniversary exhibition is "Bayside Revisited," a new solo show by photographer and printmaker Gabriel Martinez that reflects on the history of Fire Island, the New York barrier island that played an important role in gay culture.

"At first it doesn't explicitly seem like something you'd pick for your centennial celebration," Caperton admits. "But Gabe, through many projects and over many years, has explored queer history, specifically the impact of AIDS on gay culture. It's so easy when you're trying to celebrate 100 years to get mired in nostalgia and being backward-thinking, and Gabe is relentlessly forward-thinking."

The Print Center 100

Sept. 18-Dec. 19

The Print Center

1614 Latimer St.

Free, 215-735-6090

www.printcenter.org