

THE PRINT CENTER: SPRING 2024

NANCY HELLEBRAND: EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL
STEPHANIE SANTANA: WAYS OF KNOWING
MARTIE ZELT: LAND STRIDER

**NANCY HELLEBRAND:
EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL**

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April 19 – July 20, 2024
The Print Center, Philadelphia

HELLEBRAND, SANTANA AND ZELT



(left to right) Nancy Hellebrand, *Untitled BO 8943*, 2024, photogravure, 25" x 19". Printed at C. R. Ettinger Studio; Stephanie Santana, *Vantage Point*, 2022, screenprint appliqué, textile, hand embroidery, 33 ¾" x 34 ½"; Martie Zelt, *Untitled*, 1980, screenprint with thread, 30" x 22". Courtesy of Brandywine Workshop and Archives.

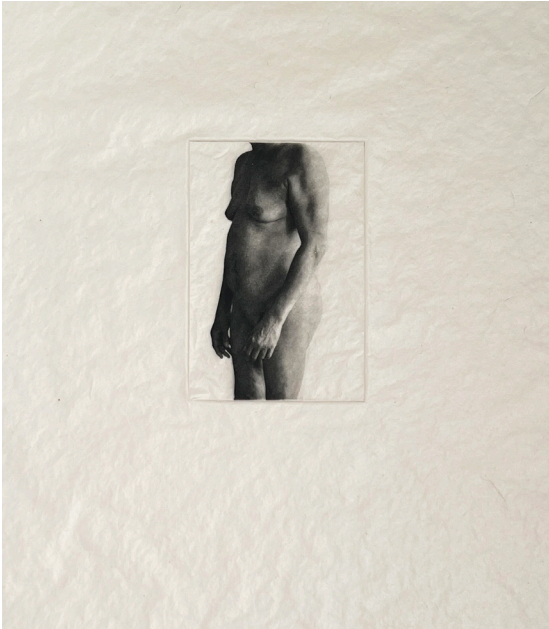
The Print Center is pleased to present three solo exhibitions featuring artists whose interests in image-making go hand-in-hand with their shrewd and responsive uses of artistic materials.

Nancy Hellebrand: EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL presents, for the first time, the esteemed photographer's nude images of aging women as captivating photogravures on paper and on plaster casts. **Stephanie Santana: Ways of Knowing**, Santana's first solo exhibition, is comprised of handmade textiles printed with images of Black matriarchs, both familial and anonymous, created in an effort to connect with ancestral knowledge. **Martie Zelt: Land Strider** is a commemorative survey of the artist's abstract prints and paperworks that capture the spirit of her nomadic existence between Philadelphia and New Mexico.

We are honored to concurrently exhibit three generations of women artists whose work affirms the continued relevance of the feminist phrase, "the personal is political" – in which individual women's personal experiences implicate their political context, deeming them worthy of social deliberation. The new work by Hellebrand and Santana, and Zelt's work from the 1970s and 1980s, was selected for presentation in conjunction with (re)FOCUS 2024, a Philadelphia citywide festival showing the movement of women-identified and BIPOC artists from the periphery to the center of the art world in the fifty years since the original FOCUS initiative in 1974. Each artist explores how abstract and representational image-making is combined with material exploration of surface and tactility to express women's concerns of their time.

As an organization, we are grateful for the opportunity to recall the original 1974 FOCUS, for which The Print Center presented the exhibition "Women Printmakers," juried by Harry Lunn (Director, Graphics International, Washington, DC) and Howardena Pindell (Assistant Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, Museum of Modern Art), that showcased the work of 23 artists, including Martie Zelt. Now, as then, we maintain belief in the vitality of printmaking to serve myriad artists' personal and political voices.

– Lauren Rosenblum, Jensen Bryan Curator



Nancy Hellebrand, *Untitled ON (side) 6734*, 2024, photogravure, 25" x 19". Printed at C. R. Ettinger Studio.

NANCY HELLEBRAND: EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL

EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL presents a selection from **Nancy Hellebrand's** ongoing series of nude portraits of older women printed as tonally rich photogravures on delicate paper and on plaster. This work skillfully explores societal norms around beauty, gender and age.

For her extended series "Naked," begun in 2017, Hellebrand photographs the bodies of older women in the nude. Reflecting upon her experiences as an aging woman, the artist recognized that societal perceptions of her intellect and beauty had diminished despite her blossoming sense of self, her growing appreciation of the people around her and her invigorated political drive. With this series, Hellebrand captures the physical truth of aging with great compassion, respect and admiration. As she states, "We see women's stories embedded in their flesh."

By photographing the women from the neck down, Hellebrand focuses the viewer's attention solely on the landscape of the body. An earlier group of works in the "Naked" series consisting of large-scale color photographs (some as large as 8' x 5') restores the model's physical presence denied by society.

This exhibition presents Hellebrand's images printed in photogravure, a 19th century photomechanical process initially used to produce high-quality commercial reproductions. Today, artists value its ability to capture minute detail, to hold rich tones and to bestow a visual softness that results in an enchanting picture unlike any other process. To make her photogravures, Hellebrand translated a digital image into a digital negative, which was then transferred to a specially prepared copper plate by Master Craftsman Lothar Osterburg. The plates were then delivered to Master Printer Cindi Ettinger of C. R. Ettinger Studio, who applied thick and thin layers of ink to the image-laden copper surface. She then either placed the plate upon a sheet of delicate Gampi paper and ran it through an etching press, or applied it to the surface of wet plaster, which allowed the image to harden in place as it dried. This highly sophisticated process demands an intimate scale that requires close scrutiny to appreciate the wealth and richness of detail. The velvet inkiness that rests on these delicate surfaces reinforces the dignified beauty of Hellebrand's figures.

The artist welcomes models of all sizes, races and abilities, and makes a great effort to provide a comfortable working atmosphere for her sitters so she can capture them in their most relaxed state. After the photography sessions, many came to understand that their aged bodies were worthy subjects, often changing the attitude they brought into the endeavor. In the words of one sitter, "Going against the cultural grain, [Hellebrand] did not want to photograph youthful beauty. Instead, she used scars, stretch marks, folds and lumps to reveal the stories of women who birth children, endure disease and enjoy worldly pleasures."



Nancy Hellebrand, *Untitled FN 5565*, 2024, photogravure on tea-stained plaster, 6 1/2" x 4". Printed at C. R. Ettinger Studio.

In the exhibition *EVERYBODYBEAUTIFUL*, the portraits are given ample space in order to grant every woman visual autonomy and equal presence. When viewed cumulatively, however, differences appear: bodies stand upright or slouch forward, arms rest on legs or aside, skin is taut or loose, breasts are round or conical, stomachs are thrust outward or fold inward. In *Untitled ON (side) 6734*, 2024, the figure stands facing the side, her right shoulder, breast, arm and thigh lost in lush, inky shadow. In contrast, on the left side of the woman's form, almost every visible detail gleams, including a small vein running up her hand. The delicate Gampi paper, wrinkled from its run through the printing press, adds a life-like texture. In *Untitled FN 5565*, 2024, a print on plaster, a woman faces forward and slightly to the side, with signs of age visible on all parts of her exposed body. The tonal range of photogravure is revealed in this tea-stained plaster sculpture, lending her body the dignity of an antique fresco. Whether on paper or plaster, these meticulously crafted photogravures affirm the artist's commitment to presenting these bodies as worthy and beautiful subjects.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nancy Hellebrand (American, b.1944, Philadelphia, PA; lives Philadelphia) attended the University of Southern California, Los Angeles; Boston University, MA; and has a BA from Columbia University, New York, NY. She studied photography with Alexey Brodovitch, Bill Brandt and John Coplans, each of whom influenced her deeply.

Hellebrand was the first American, and the first living woman, to have a solo exhibition at The National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; and has also had solo exhibitions at Halsted Gallery, Detroit, MI; James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, PA; Erie Art Museum, PA; Museum of the Southwest, Midland, TX; Parthenon Museum, Nashville, TN; Light Gallery and Pace/MacGill, both New York, NY; and Locks Gallery, Paul Cava Gallery and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, all Philadelphia. She has been included in many group exhibitions, including at Allentown Art Museum, PA; Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona Beach, FL; Arcadia University, Glenside, PA; Haverford College, PA; International Center of Photography, Light Gallery and Museum of Modern Art, all New York, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Photography Place and The Print Center, all Philadelphia; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Tampa Museum of Art, FL; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; as well as Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany; Tate Liverpool, UK; and the Barbican Centre and Tate Britain, both London, UK.

Hellebrand's photographs are in the collections of the Allentown Art Museum; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Princeton University Art Museum, NJ; and the Museum of the City of London, UK. She has received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her

work has been widely reviewed in periodicals including *American Photographers*, *Aperture*, *Artforum*, *Artnet Magazine*, *Modern Photography*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *People Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Philadelphia Magazine*, *The Photo Review*, *Print Collectors Newsletter* and *The Village Voice*. She has two monographs dedicated to her work and has been included in numerous other publications. As an educator, Hellebrand taught photography at Bucks County Community College, Newtown, PA; Yale University; Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York, NY; and the University of the Arts, Philadelphia.



Stephanie Santana, *Wavelength*, 2024, screenprint, wax pastel, flashe, cotton textile, batting, thread, 49 ½" x 36"

STEPHANIE SANTANA: WAYS OF KNOWING

In *Ways of Knowing*, **Stephanie Santana's** prints and constructed mixed-media textile works explore interior worlds, mythologies, navigational tools and resistance strategies of African diasporic origins. The works are part of a larger body called "The Wayfinding Series," which Santana began in 2022 and describes as "honoring Black women as wayfinders, planners, travelers, strategists, timeline jumpers and archivists." With it, she endeavors to visualize and understand what her Black matriarchal ancestors experienced on an intuitive and emotional level and examine how their concerns are relevant in the present day.

Santana's process is one of discovery and deliberation. Over time, the artist has assembled a working archive comprising personal photographs of her own childhood and cherished women in her



Stephanie Santana, *Safe Passage*, 2024, screenprint, monotype, hand embroidery, flashe, cotton textile, batting, thread, 51 ½" x 49".
Photo: Shawn Inglima

extended family, along with historical vernacular photographs of anonymous Black matriarchs. The same women appear multiple times within a single work and reappear across multiple pieces. The artist describes her decision-making process on materials and techniques to employ as a sequence of “responsive encounters” with these photographs. The images are transferred and translated several times over; they are screenprinted and monoprinted onto fabric that is then reused in numerous ways using traditional quilting techniques. To this, she adds hand-stitched embroidery, much like a series of visual annotations that directly engage with both the figures on the surface and the colorful abstract forms surrounding them.

The artist’s process is evident in *Until You Rest*, 2024, in which an early 20th century portrait photograph is collaged and screenprinted onto cotton textiles, cut into sections, rotated and then recombined as a pieced quilt. The matriarch’s piercing eyes, gentle mouth and the lace collar of her dress, reappear in sections multiple times over.

Santana preserves and distorts the imagery to create the impression of visual static emanating outwards from the bottom right edge. The work serves as a reminder that the search for ancestral knowledge is a search for the self and at the same time, that the loss of self is an important part in the process of rediscovery.

In *Safe Passage*, 2024, printed images are again organized and augmented with hand embroidery as colorful forms of elaboration and protection. At its center, a mother holds her young children close. Orange stitching covers the woman’s bodice and forms a mask on top of one of the young children’s faces. At the bottom left corner, the artist’s family poses for the camera in a photo from the 1950s. Yellow thread obscures the signs hovering over the figures in the background, focusing the viewer’s attention on the smartly dressed, smiling figures. Santana also introduces the image of a 19th century American glass pitcher found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection. She repeats it in varying states: as an exact reproduction, reduced to a silhouette, and reimagined by the artist as filled with painterly brushstrokes to symbolize the water that once filled the vessel. The work references the seminal photograph by Lorna Simpson, *Waterbearer*, 1986, which shows a Black woman from behind holding both a silver and a plastic pitcher. Santana’s pitcher is also a waterbearer, bearing witness to history and full of memories. To the artist, its presence aptly serves, in the words of poet bell hooks, as a “reminder of the way history is held and shaped.”

Through the processes of printing, sewing and embroidery, the artist meditates on the lessons absorbed through this labor-intensive work. Santana asks herself and her audience, “How is information transmitted, and how does it change shape, shift and distort as it is passed?” Her printed textile works construct a bridge through time and geography. Information is revealed, prescribed societal roles are challenged, and alternative spaces of knowledge and self-definition are discovered.



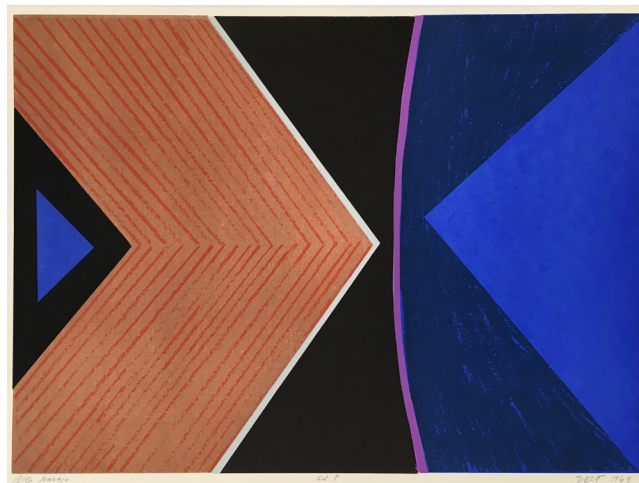
Photo: Noemie Marguerite

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Stephanie Santana (American, b.1984, Los Angeles, CA; lives Brooklyn, NY) is a visual artist whose practice is rooted in the expansive traditions of textile arts and fine art printmaking. She received a BA in Communication Studies from Western

Washington University, Bellingham, in 2006 and an AAS in Textile/ Surface Design from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, in 2018.

Santana's work has been exhibited in group shows at The John & Robyn Horn Gallery, Penland School of Craft, Bakersville, NC; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, MA; Highpoint Center for Printmaking, Minneapolis, MN; and the Claire Oliver Gallery, EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all New York, NY. It is held in both private and public collections, including the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, and Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Santana has presented lectures and workshops at academic and cultural institutions including The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, all Philadelphia, PA. She was a 2023 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow in Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts, a Finalist in The Print Center's 97th ANNUAL International Competition and was awarded a Kahn Mason Studio Immersion Project Fellowship at the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. She has received generous support from the Windgate Foundation and Sustainable Arts Foundation. Santana is a founding member of Black Women of Print – an organization for independent mid-career and established Black women printmakers – as well as a member of The Santana Project – an intergenerational, interdisciplinary art collective.



Martie Zelt, *Big Navajo*, 1969, screenprint, 19" x 25", edition of 8

MARTIE ZELT: LAND STRIDER

Land Strider surveys **Martie Zelt's** lifetime of work in printmaking and handmade paperworks, focused on her innovations in these processes during the 1970s and 80s. The exhibition's title, *Land Strider*, is drawn from one of the artworks in the show as an apt description of both Zelt's nomadic life between the Northeast and the Southwest, and her primary artistic interests in rural and urban topographies.

Born in western Pennsylvania, the artist lived briefly during childhood in Alamogordo, New Mexico, while her father was in the Army Air Corps. Throughout her life, she remained attuned to these formative memories of New Mexico's landscape, defined by the Sacramento Mountains and White Sands National Park, as well as the distinct history and culture of its Native American tribes. Zelt carried this experience of the American Southwest back to Philadelphia, where she studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and independently learned screenprinting and then lithography in the 1960s.



Martie Zelt, *Land Strider*, mixed media, 24 ¼" x 32 ¼"

Upon returning to the United States in 1961 after time in Spain and Brazil, Zelt was the first artist in Philadelphia to embrace photo-screenprinting techniques for creating fine art prints. Her large geometric abstractions feature reduced forms and bold colors. Two examples, *Expressway* and *Big Navajo*, both from 1969, are early references to the two terrains to which she felt most connected. In one, Zelt registers the impact of the Schuylkill Expressway in reshaping the Philadelphia landscape. In the other, she recalls the high desert climate and landscape of the Navajo Nation, located in the Four Corners region of the American Southwest. Zelt moved between the regions of Philadelphia and New Mexico several times throughout her life – and held both close to her heart – but eventually settled in Roswell, New Mexico in the late 1980s, where she became a beloved community member.

An encounter in 1976 with venerated papermaker Joe Wilfer of the Upper U.S. Paper Mill in Wisconsin determined the future direction of Zelt's practice. Having already begun to use a sewing

machine to stitch across her abstract prints, the meeting propelled Zelt to further embrace tactility, and she started making her own paper from pulp. The introduction of handmade paper directly into her prints, sometimes as a support and, on other occasions, as independent abstract elements, had a monumental impact. Geometric shapes remained at the center of her visual language but, over time, lost their hard edges, rigidity and angularity. Zelt commented, "The segmentation and geometry in my work has never been disassociated from notes taken from the natural world around me." These new, highly textured paperworks appear as complex topographies that recall the cultures of the two places she alternately called home – Philadelphia and New Mexico – as viewed from above. For example, *Return to A-QQ No. 1*, 1982, lovingly references, in both name and composition, the esteemed printmaking workshop Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In this piece, Zelt combined etching, Xerox, woodcut, found fabric and handmade paper to imagine the façade of the graphic workshop sitting atop a triangular mesa akin to those that define its surrounding terrain.

During the mid-1980s, Zelt's relationship to print and papermaking advanced again. She began to draw upon even more dynamic materials – including store-bought fabrics, fake fur, sequins, glitter, Velcro snaps, acrylic paint, fishhooks, metal hinges, twine, machine sewing, linen thread – and layered them with numerous printmaking techniques – lithography, photoetching, woodcut, collagraphy and Xerox – within a single work hung from a wooden dowel. With the embrace of these varied and sundry materials, her landscapes incorporated the detritus of everyday life. In *Land Strider*, small squares and fragile shards of printed and hand-formed paper are arranged in a row, like a colorful bas-relief, an ornamental fringe, rows of sprouting plants or an overhead view of Philadelphia's gridded street plan. Zelt commented, "You can't look at my work like you do a picture. I don't use printing for imagery, but rather for texture and color in the same way that I use the surface of handmade paper."

The mesmerizing prints and paperworks shared in *Land Strider* are a testament to Martie Zelt's lifelong commitment to pursuing creative fulfillment and innovation. Her work is a potent reminder of her great impact on many as an artist and friend.

The Print Center is grateful to Catherine De Maria of Warehouse 1-10 in Magdalena, New Mexico, for facilitating the loan of Martie Zelt's final artwork, *Untitled*, 2023, for display in this commemorative exhibition.



Photo: Roswell Daily Record

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Martie Zelt (American, b.1930, Washington, PA; d.2023, Roswell, NM) was an important figure in the Philadelphia printmaking scene of the 1970s and is known for her vibrant screenprints and

meticulously crafted paperworks. She studied at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Connecticut College, New London; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), Philadelphia; New School for Social Research, New York; Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo, Brazil; and ultimately received a BFA from Tyler School of Art & Architecture, Temple University, Philadelphia.

Zelt began teaching in Philadelphia in the 1960s, including for Prints in Progress at The Print Center, PAFA and the University of the Arts. Her exhibition record in and outside of Philadelphia is extensive, including more than 20 exhibitions at The Print Center, including the 1974 show, *Women Printmakers*, as part of the citywide feminist art initiative FOCUS, and a solo show in 1975. Zelt printed at the Brandywine Workshop and Archive, Philadelphia, and Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, and her work was included in the Brooklyn Museum's publication *Thirty Years of American Printmaking* (1976). Zelt spent the latter part of her life in Roswell, NM, designing and

creating a 32' mosaic mural for the Civic Center and a hand-crafted tile mural for the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge. While in the Southwest, she received a Fulbright Grant, with which she set up a papermaking studio in Veracruz, Mexico. She was awarded two Roswell (NM) Artist-in-Residence Program (RAiR) grants.

In her lifetime, Zelt had solo shows at the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Dolan/Maxwell Gallery, Marian Locks Gallery and PAFA, all Philadelphia; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; and the Roswell Museum, NM. Her work has appeared in group exhibitions in the United States and elsewhere, many of which acknowledge her contribution to innovation in paperworks during the 1980s. She is included in public collections across the United States, including the University of New Mexico Museum, Albuquerque; Brooklyn Museum; Yale University, New Haven, CT; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Princeton University, NJ; Roswell Museum; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. The estate of the artist is represented by Warehouse 1-10, Magdalena, NM.

PROGRAMS

Gallery Talk & Opening Reception

Thursday, April 18, 2024

5:30pm Gallery Talk with Hellebrand, Santana and Lauren
Rosenblum, Jensen Bryan Curator

6 – 7:30pm Reception

Additional Programs (all in-person and on Zoom)

Conversation with Stephanie Santana

Thursday, May 2, 6pm

Conversation with Nancy Hellebrand

Thursday, May 9, 6pm

Panel Discussion: 50 Years of Philadelphia Women Arts Leaders

Thursday, May 23, 6pm

All of The Print Center's exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public. To register for a Zoom event or for more information visit printcenter.org.

Images are courtesy of the Artists unless otherwise noted.

ABOUT (RE)FOCUS

(re)FOCUS celebrates the 50th anniversary of Philadelphia Focuses on Women in the Visual Arts/1974, a citywide festival recognizing women artists. With over 150 exhibitions, panels, lectures, workshops and demonstrations, it was one of the first large-scale surveys of the work of contemporary American women artists, signaling the inception of the American Feminist Art Movement. (re) FOCUS 2024 is also a Philadelphia citywide festival showing how women-identified and BIPOC artists have moved from the periphery to the center of the art world. Like its 1974 predecessor, (re)FOCUS is a collaboration among Philadelphia's large, small, and diverse visual arts institutions. www.refocus2024.org

 (re)FOCUS 2024

ABOUT THE PRINT CENTER

Mission

For more than a century, The Print Center has encouraged the growth and understanding of photography and printmaking as vital contemporary arts through exhibitions, publications and educational programs. The Print Center has an international voice and a strong sense of local purpose. Free and open to the public, it presents changing exhibitions, which highlight established and emerging, local, national and international contemporary artists. It mounts one of the oldest annual art competitions in the country, now in its 98th year, provides the Artists-in-Schools Program to Philadelphia public high school students and its Gallery Store offers a carefully selected array of contemporary prints and photographs onsite and online.

Funders

Support for The Print Center is offered by: Drexel University Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design; Forman Family Fund; Sheila Fortune Foundation; Fund for Children; FS Investments; Allen Hilles Fund; William King Foundation; Phillip and Edith Leonian Foundation; Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation; Christopher Ludwick Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; PA Arts & Culture Recovery Program; William Penn Foundation; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; Philadelphia Cultural Fund; The Philadelphia Foundation; Rosenlund Family Foundation; University of the Arts; Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial; and our Board of Governors, Luminaries, members and friends.





NOTES

THE PRINT CENTER

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Free and open to the public
Tuesday — Saturday, 11am — 6pm

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