

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY
PRINT MAKING
EXHIBITION FORUM | 2018
L U X E M B O U R G

Conference B: Monday, April 23, 2018 at 7pm : (english)
Location: Carré, 1 rue de l'Académie, L-1112 Luxembourg

Conference under the patronage
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Organized by:



TITLE: The Print Room of the Royal Library of Belgium: The Past and Future of a 'National' Collection of Graphic Art.

Intervenant: Joris Van Grieken, Curator of Prints and Drawings, Head of the Print Room, Royal Library of Belgium

The Royal Library of Belgium was founded in 1837 as the National Library of a young nation. From the beginning, prints and drawings were part of the library's holdings and the institution soon started to make new acquisitions of works on paper by old masters as well as by contemporary (Belgian) artists.

This contribution will start with an overview of how the acquisition policy of works on paper by modern and contemporary artists evolved over time. This history shaped the collection to what it is today, with its heights and strengths, but also with its defects and weaknesses. It will become clear that our present and future acquisition policy has to be based on an analysis of the existing collection.

Furthermore we will also have to deal with a drastically changed artistic and 'graphic' landscape, but also with social, economic, technological, political and institutional evolutions. Is the 19th century idea of a 'National' graphic collection still up to date in a globalized world, in a unified Europe and in a federalized Belgium? Can and must we maintain the national and encyclopedic scope of the collection? What is the future place for a large graphic collection attached to a modern National Library? How can we deal with a digitized society and with digital or digitized collections? In the end, we have to think about our 'users' or 'clients'. What can we offer to 21st century artists, students, scholars, curators and last but not least; the public at large?