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Arts

Artist in Residence: Prominent Printmaker Calls Tosa Home

German tradition, modern technology influence painter preparing for shows at the Haggarty and in South Africa.

By [Natalie Wysong](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 31, 2011



The presence of technically proficient German immigrants and a large number of paper mills united to give printmaking a significant role in Milwaukee's economic and cultural history.

This confluence in the past still contributes to the Midwest's continuing position as "a hotbed of printmaking," according to artist Jessica Meuninck-Ganger.

An accomplished printmaker herself, Wauwatosa resident Meuninck-Ganger is passionate about the art and its story.

"Historically, printmaking was used to reach a broad audience regarding social issues," Meuninck-Ganger said. "Printmaking was the voice of the people, a democratic form that helped disseminate ideas.

"In terms of technology, the printing press was the equivalent of the internet."

A highly technical discipline, printmaking required expertly trained workers, many of whom could be found among the immigrants in the Milwaukee area.

Modern printmaking, however, primarily is a visual art, and not for the reproduction of text, as was traditional.

Head of print and narrative forms and an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Peck School of the Arts, Meuninck-Ganger is a born and bred Midwesterner. She studied art education at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., then earned a master of fine arts degree in studio arts from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. Meuninck-Ganger went on to teach fine arts courses there before moving to Wisconsin.

Although Meuninck-Ganger still finds the relationship with paper "most satisfying," she welcomes technology in her art. She is preparing for an upcoming regional show, "Current Tendencies II," an invitational of several regional contemporary artists at the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University.

Meuninck-Ganger's installation will combine her prints with new media work of collaborator Nathaniel Stern. The result will be an outsized exhibit that merges projected video with printed elements.

"It's a larger-than-life-scale comic book spread," Meuninck-Ganger said.

Beginning with Gutenberg's printing press, Meuninck-Ganger and Stern's installation will feature a narrative that takes viewers through a timeline of various significant events in printmaking and time-based media, such as video.

Meuninck-Ganger is also exhibiting at an art show that will be opening in South Africa in the summer. This will be the second show she has done in Johannesburg.