Award Speech in Offenbach am Main on September 9, 2023 by Andreas Weber, Chairman FISS e.V., Friends & Supporters of the International Senefelder Foundation (ISS) and ISS Board Member.

Ladies and Gentlemen! We are very pleased that today, on September 9, 2023, we are once again able to award the International Senefelder Prize. September 9 is a very special commemorative date, commemorating the day in 1886 when the International Copyright Act was signed in Bern to protect works of literature and art. A milestone for artists! And for the art of printing especially, if you include the long tugging and tugging for the status 'away from the art of reproduction' to the artistic original graphic. By the way, since March 2018, the art of printing has been included in UNESCO's intangible world cultural heritage.

It is also significant that we are able to be in the rooms of the Offenbach Art Association - in the heart of the artists and art lovers of the Senefelder city of Offenbach am Main, so to speak. On behalf of the entire Kunstverein board, our heartfelt thanks go to Gisela von Slatow, co-opted board member and honorary curator, and to Sylvester Kraaz, 2nd chairman, for their excellent cooperation. And special thanks go to our ISS board colleague Eckhard Gehrmann, who, in team with Karl Walter, excellently arranged the exhibition of the finalists' works, which was well worth seeing. This should be worth a happy applause!

In the course of almost half a century, the International Senefelder Prize has been able to award prizes to renowned artists in 13 competitions, who, like Christian Kruck, the very first main prize winner in 1975, were subsequently accompanied by winners such as Bruno Bruni, Rainer Schwarz, Eva Bosch, Eckhard Gehrmann, Jim Dine, Ingrid Ledent, Kuniko Tadakoro, Anja Trojanowska, Alena Klatikova, Magdalena Uchman and Amat Kongwaree, as well as special prize winner Jean-Michel Machet, a world-class lithographer in Paris, to name but a few.

Since all artists who succeed as finalists donate their submitted works to the International Senefelder Foundation, the most important contemporary collection of almost 500 artistic lithographs could be created, which is conserved and cataloged in the Offenbach House of City History. In addition, many important incunabula works from the collection of the flat printing pioneer Carl Hans Garte have been donated.

This documents the fact that Senefelder's lithography, or so-called chemical printing, which owes its breakthrough primarily to renowned artists of the 19th century, and which then shaped the world of printing technology as a multi-billion dollar industrial business, is today producing artistic excellence. This is especially true, almost unexpectedly, of many young artists who come from the digital-savvy generation.

Why is that? Senefelder's invention is on the cutting edge even after more than 200 years, especially because photolithography plays a major role in modern semiconductor technology. For me personally, in the context of what's contemporary, it's not at all surprising what comes out when you ask via ChatGPT - that is, via artificial intelligence - the question about the significance of the International Senefelder Award. I quote from the 'digital' answer:

"The winners of the International Senefelder Award are often seen as visionaries and role models in their industry, and their achievements help to drive development and progress in the fields of printing and communications. The award also serves to raise awareness of the importance of lithography and other printing technologies to modern society and highlight their cultural and economic relevance.

The significance of the Senefelder Award lies not only in the recognition of individual artistic achievement, but also in the promotion and further development of the art of printing as an art form. The award helps to honor and promote cultural diversity and technical progress in the field of printmaking." - So much for the coherent text via artificial intelligence - written fully automatically.