

**Philadelphia City Paper**  
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**Fit to Print**  
**By Rachel Frankford**

**Curator José Roca gives us the early word on the ambitious "Philagrafika 2010" print odyssey.**

Philagrafika, formerly the Philadelphia Print Collaborative, is only six years old but is getting more industrious and ambitious by the day. The group of print artists and friends is thinking big with "Philagrafika 2010," intended to be an international printmaking quadrennial starting in, yes, 2010. They've got a lot in the works — widespread involvement of local artists and art institutions, site-specific installations around city created by artists from all over the world, and a deep look at innovative forms of printmaking (think car tires instead of a piece of linoleum, or prints screened onto living grass). CP talked to newly announced art director José Roca, a curator and critic based in Bogotá, Colombia whose past experience includes co-curating Puerto Rico's 2004 San Juan Triennial (also a print festival) and the recent Sao Paulo Biennial. And he's even been around this town before; in 2002 he spent seven months as a Whitney-Lauder curatorial fellow at the ICA.

**City Paper:** So you'll be spending a lot of time in Philadelphia.



NORTHERN EXPOSURE: José Roca will move from Bogotá to Philadelphia for the international printmaking quadrennial show. : rafael piñeres

**José Roca:** Next year I will come several times. And then, September 2007 or [January 2008], I will be moving here to live here for two years.

**CP:** That's a big commitment.

**JR:** Yes, that's the only way to do it. I did the Sao Paulo Biennial without living in Brazil, and I must say that I needed to spend more time there. It was hard to travel around and go there every two months. It's better to be there every day, at the helm as they say.

**CP:** Are you especially interested in prints?

**JR:** I would say that my expertise and my primary interest is contemporary art. But I am a print specialist, and I've come to learn over the years that printmaking is at the core of contemporary art making. So it comes together in a very interesting way. ... [The San Juan Triennial] was the first large event that I curated, and it was based on prints, but before that I had done many traveling exhibitions in Colombia on printmaking.

**CP:** How is your vision for 2010 affected or inspired by your experience in San Juan?

**JR:** It's not that I'm doing here what I couldn't do there. It's just that some of the most radical ideas couldn't be carried out there, because it was the first time for the print triennial. We decided not to dig too deep, and in a way respect its being based on more traditional forms of printmaking. So I would say all the experience I've gained over the years working at San Juan and Sao Paulo will inform my project for Philadelphia.

**CP:** How do you see 2010?

**JR:** I envision it to be a large show that will involve most of the institutions in Philadelphia around this idea of the expanded field of printmaking, so that the visitor will have many things to see, to experience and to reflect upon. No one in the city — we want — will be left unmarked by the experience, and no one interested in printmaking for sure. It should be something like the Venice Biennial; everyone in the art world goes there. So that's at least the idea we have — everybody interested in printmaking has to come to Philadelphia in 2010, and everyone in contemporary art will have to come because it's not just about prints, it's about contemporary art making.

**CP:** How do you see prints at the core of today's art?

**JR:** I've been seeing art for more than 20 years, since I've been working in museums, and when I started thinking about possible projects and artists for San Juan, I came to the realization that many works I was interested in could be understood as forms of printmaking. They were installations, they were video, they were paintings, they were sculptural projects. That led me to the realization that prints are more pervasive than we give them credit to be. Once you start thinking outside the box on what a print is, you start to realize they are everywhere, and they are really ingrained in many of the most interesting contemporary artists' works. ... Most people think a print is something that is done in several copies upon a paper support. Just to go beyond that would be radical, is the understanding in many people's minds. ... But we intend to be much more radical than that. We intend for people to ask themselves, but why is this a print?

**CP:** I feel like this is quite a coup for Philadelphia. We can kind of have an inferiority complex.

**JR:** Yes ... I think if it works well, and we are sure it will, we'll help position Philadelphia as a major destination for art. Not only prints in the U.S., but also for people coming from other countries.

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—Rachel Frankford