



BOSTON
ATHENÆUM

NEWS RELEASE

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The Boston Athenæum is proud to present the upcoming exhibition, ***Collecting for the Boston Athenæum in the 21st Century: Prints & Photographs***, opening to the public in the Athenæum's Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery on Wednesday, April 6, and on view through Sunday, September 4. A free and public reception celebrating the opening of the exhibition will be held on Tuesday, April 5, 5:30–7:30 pm, at the Boston Athenæum at 10½ Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.

Curated by Catharina Slutterback, Curator of Prints & Photographs, the exhibition will include more than 70 of the over 1,100 works of art on paper that have been acquired by the Boston Athenæum since the year 2000. Through these and other acquisitions, the Athenæum's collection continues to capture the diversity and heterogeneity of New England, its coastline, inland forests, cities and villages, and farms and factories. This exhibition will embrace the eclectic and multifaceted nature of the institution's collection, thereby celebrating the many faces of New England.

A wide variety of media, ranging from daguerreotypes and inkjet prints to lithographs and white-line woodcuts, will be on display. Historic objects dating from the mid- to late 19th century will hang alongside contemporary works by regional artists.

The exhibition will be arranged according to the following themes: New England views; Boston's built environment; New England's industrial revolution; maritime prints; portraits; and reform issues of the 19th century. Within each of these categories, the objects are stylistically eclectic. Views of New England, from Martha's Vineyard to coastal New Hampshire, will be represented by a range of genres, including the bird's-eye view, the panorama, the travel poster, and the vignette (*Cape Cod* and *Under Lamplight*). Boston's built environment, both past and present, will be represented by chromolithographs, traditional and digital photographs, and watercolors. Aerial views and portraits of ecclesiastical and commercial buildings will be shown alongside depictions of tenement housing (*Maker's Mark*). Group and individual portraits of both the famous and the unknown will be shown in a variety of forms from the conventional to the unusual (*Representative Journals and Journalists*). New England's industrial revolution will be explored with 19th-century factory views celebrating new technology and transportation. (*Swamscot Machine Co.*). Paired with these views will be contemporary depictions of abandoned or repurposed factory buildings (*Factory at Day's End*). New England's maritime culture will be represented by a group of ship prints ranging from an 1845 lithograph by Fitz Henry Lane to a contemporary white-line woodcut of an Essex, Massachusetts, shipbuilding company (*Steam Packet Ship Mass. in a Squall*). A suite of prints addressing reform issues of the 19th century will also be displayed and will include a rare Boston-related political cartoon related to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (*Practical Illustration of the Fugitive Slave Law*).

The Boston Athenæum's first floor and Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery are open to the public seven days a week (Monday–Thursday, 9 am–8 pm; Friday, 9 am–5:30 pm; Saturday, 9 am–4

pm; Sunday, 12 pm–4 pm). Public admission to the gallery is \$5; members are admitted for free.

About the Athenæum's Prints & Photographs Department

The Boston Athenæum has been acquiring works of art on paper since the early 1800s, but it was not until the mid-20th century that a department was established with a mission dedicated to visually documenting New England culture. Today, the department houses a nationally recognized collection of prints, photographs, and drawings dating from the 18th century to the present.

Primarily a collection of historical documentation, it provides a unique visual record of New England cultural and political life. The collection is particularly strong in prints, photographs, and architectural drawings depicting the built environment and the topography of Boston and New England in the 19th century. The collection also contains fine prints and photographs of the Civil War, as well as political cartoons, portraits, and historical prints that chronicle the history of the United States. The collections are also a significant resource for the study of American art. Specializing in works by Boston artists, photographers, and printmakers, the collection also traces the development of printing and photographic techniques in the 19th century.

About the Boston Athenæum:

The Boston Athenæum, a membership library and museum, first opened its doors in 1807. Today, it remains a vibrant and active institution that serves thousands of members and scholars with a distinguished circulating and research collection, rich and varied special collections, extensive electronic resources, in-depth educational programming, and quiet reading spaces. The Athenæum's first floor, including the Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery, and many of its programs, are open to the public. Membership is open to anyone interested in joining. For more information about the Athenæum, visit www.bostonathenaeum.org. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter (@bostonathenaeum), and Instagram (#bostonathenaeum).