

CROWN POINT PRESS AT FIFTY



Anderson Gallery of Graphic Art
October 20, 2012–February 17, 2013

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When Kathan Brown established Crown Point Press in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1962, she expressed a commitment to etching that was remarkable for the time. Most print publishing ventures in the 1960s focused on lithography and screenprinting. Brown welcomed artists who were new to intaglio and offered an opportunity to explore alternative printmaking possibilities that were ideally suited to contemporary expression.

Since then Brown and her staff have encouraged constant innovation and disseminated masterful techniques in intaglio printing—any process in which incisions in a plate's surface hold the ink that will create the image. First with photoetching and then, beginning in the 1990s, with the revival of photogravure, a printing process that has been around for as long as photography itself, they have shown a special commitment to developing ways of realizing photography projects in print. Aquatint has become

another trademark of the press, permitting artists to swathe their compositions in printed tonal fields, merging ink and paper. Examples created using these and other intaglio processes can be seen throughout the exhibition.

In 1991 the Fine Arts Museums acquired the Crown Point Press Archive, which consists of one impression of each print published by the press from 1962 to the present. The archive now contains more than 1,500 published prints as well as numerous working proofs that help further illuminate the artists' processes.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of Crown Point the Fine Arts Museums present prints by fifteen internationally renowned artists made at the press over its five decades. Some, such as Robert Bechtle, Tom Marioni, and Wayne Thiebaud, have returned to Crown Point throughout their careers; others, including Tomma Abts, Darren Almond, Chris Ofili, and Kiki Smith, have only begun to work with the press more recently.





Tomma Abts
Untitled (Brushstroke), 2009
Untitled (Diagonals), 2009
Untitled (Triangle), 2009
Published by Crown Point Press

Tomma Abts (German, active London, b. 1967)

A London-based painter and winner of the 2006 Turner Prize, Tomma Abts visited Crown Point Press in the spring of 2009 and worked for two weeks on an etching project guided by the etching process itself. In an interview with Crown Point's director, Valerie Wade, Abts explained her method: "When painting I have to adjust the whole surface whenever I make any changes, and this layer will always be embedded in the final surface. Here I could manipulate each layer separately, and then decide whether to add or subtract it, or do it again slightly differently. The layering is lighter and more playful. But when I arrived at the final version of each print, I would know that I wanted it like this exactly."¹

Darren Almond (English, b. 1971)

Known primarily for his work in installation, film, sculpture, and photography, English artist Darren Almond extended his practice to include photogravure during his time at Crown Point Press in 2010. The prints in *Civil Dawn* are from a project that Almond began while spending time with the monks of Mount Hiei, Japan. The title refers to the moment of dawn's breaking, when the human eye is just able to identify shapes. It is also the moment when the monks, who practice a form of meditation that involves running, can pause for rest and rehydration.

Mamma Andersson (Swedish, b. 1962)

Jockum Nordström (Swedish, b. 1963)

Mamma Andersson and Jockum Nordström are a dynamic force in the international art world. Both have done individual work at Crown Point Press—Nordström in December 2007, and Andersson in December 2008. The prints in the exhibition come from a collaborative project that the two undertook in April 2010.

Robert Bechtle (American, b. 1932)

An accomplished painter and draftsman, San Francisco native Robert Bechtle has also made a name for himself with arresting Photorealist scenes of everyday urban life rendered in print. Bechtle first attempted printmaking at Crown Point Press in 1967 with an early hard-ground etching project, but he abandoned it before completion. It wasn't until 1982 that he returned to intaglio printing, achieving significant success with the more accommodating soft-ground process. Since then Bechtle has returned to the press every few years, working with the variety of intaglio processes that Crown Point makes available.

John Chiara (American, b. 1971)

John Chiara is a San Francisco-based artist whose practice largely centers on photography; he was one of the first photographers to work with Crown Point Press, completing his inaugural project there in 2006.

Katsura Funakoshi (Japanese, b. 1951)

Though he typically works in sculpture, Katsura Funakoshi has made prints at Crown Point Press three times, starting in 1990. During his third visit, in 1998, he began to envelop the figures in many of his prints in profuse color, marking a departure from his normally restrained palette.

Sol LeWitt (American, 1928–2007)

One of the most influential American artists of the twentieth century, Sol LeWitt was the first New York-based artist to work at Crown Point Press, becoming a regular figure at the studio after his first arrival in 1972. *Not Straight Lines* was one of the last projects that he completed at the press.

Tom Marioni (American, b. 1937)

San Francisco-based conceptual artist and sculptor Tom Marioni's first project at Crown Point dates to 1974. He has since continued his association with the press, making numerous cerebral prints that involve motion and sound. Repetitive actions are paramount to Marioni's practice and are reified through his meticulous mark-making.

Julie Mehretu (American, b. Ethiopia, 1970)

Just a few months before New York-based artist Julie Mehretu's first visit to Crown Point Press in 2005, Hurricane Katrina passed through New Orleans, and the looming storm Rita promised further devastation. These powerful forces inspired her first group of prints at the press, which she referred to collectively as "Heavy Weather." The energetic marks covering the plates of all three "Heavy Weather" prints were produced using many of the intaglio processes for which Crown Point is known. Mehretu returned to create new work at the press in 2008.

Chris Ofili (English, active Trinidad, b. 1968)

Winner of the 1998 Turner Prize, Chris Ofili worked on two projects at Crown Point Press in November 2008. One was the series *Rainbow*, dominated by exuberant color due to both printing and paper choices. It is shown in its entirety in the exhibition.

Ed Ruscha (American, b. 1937)

In 1982 the Los Angeles-based artist Ed Ruscha completed his first project at Crown Point Press. He has returned periodically ever since, most recently in 2009. The artist is continuously inspired by the open road and its signage; the prints in the exhibition display varied approaches to the subject, their content obliterated for aesthetic effect by means of photogravure.



Chris Ofili
Rainbow—Purple Palms, 2008
Published by Crown Point Press



Wayne Thiebaud
Tide Figures, 2006
Published by Crown Point Press

Kiki Smith (American, b. Germany, 1954)

While Kiki Smith was in San Francisco in 2004 contemplating a commission for the rebuilt de Young Museum, which would open the following year, Kathan Brown approached the New York-based artist about undertaking a project at Crown Point Press. Smith agreed and returned to San Francisco in 2006, making two prints that share references to the homeless population she encountered during her time in the city.

Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)

California-based artist Wayne Thiebaud has been a continual presence in the Crown Point Press studio since his first project there in 1964. Perhaps best known for his whimsical depictions of cakes, pies, and other sugary delights, Thiebaud has also taken a varied approach to representing the landscape, deploying a diversity of vantage points in numerous prints over the years. His experimental prints of beach subjects may be less familiar; drawn directly onto the copper plate, they reveal the artist's delight in the physical process of creation.

Richard Tuttle (American, b. 1941)

Primarily a sculptor, Richard Tuttle has also had a distinguished printmaking career. He began his work at Crown Point Press in 1993 and returned yearly between 1998 and 2005. *Deep, in the Snow* is an installation piece that merges print and sculpture; there is no proscribed arrangement for the twelve prints contained by the copper basket. As Tuttle described his piece: "The large image is about coming down to a point, and the small images frame each other, with the energy going down to my signature, which is under the box. The small prints are in a kind of limbo—you can't see them entirely unless you handle them. You might decide to do that, or not. I like that."²

Notes

¹ Wade, Valerie. "Tomma Abts." *Overview* (Crown Point Press newsletter)(Fall 2009): 2.

² Brown, Kathan. "Richard Tuttle: Deep, in the Snow." *Overview* (Crown Point Press newsletter) (Fall 2006): n.p.

Works in the Exhibition

All works are published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco. Unless otherwise noted, all are from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco Crown Point Press Archive, gift of Crown Point Press. Sheet measurements for prints are in inches, height preceding width.

Tomma Abts (German, active London, b. 1967)

Untitled (Brushstroke), 2009

Color water-bite aquatint, aquatint, hard-ground etching, and drypoint
23 1/8 x 17 5/8 in.

Printed by lanne Kjorlie
2010.39.1.3

Untitled (Diagonals), 2009

Color aquatint and soft-ground etching
23 1/8 x 17 5/8 in.

Printed by lanne Kjorlie
2010.39.1.4

Untitled (Triangle), 2009

Color spit-bite aquatint and aquatint
23 1/8 x 17 5/8 in.

Printed by lanne Kjorlie
2010.39.1.5

Darren Almond (English, b. 1971)

Civil Dawn, 2010

Portfolio of five photogravures on gampi paper chine collé

Each 23 1/8 x 15 1/8 in.

Printed by Asa Muir-Harmony
2010.39.2.1.1–5

Mamma Andersson (Swedish, b. 1962)

Jockum Nordström (Swedish, b. 1963)

Faces, 2010

Color spit-bite aquatint, sugar-lift aquatint, aquatint, and soft-ground etching

28 1/2 x 21 1/2 in.

Printed by Emily York
2012.40.1.1

Pieces, 2010

Color spit-bite aquatint, sugar-lift aquatint, and soft-ground etching

28 1/2 x 21 1/2 in.

Printed by Emily York
2012.40.1.6

Robert Bechtle (American, b. 1932)

Three Houses on Pennsylvania Avenue, 2011

Color soft-ground etching and aquatint
30 1/2 x 39 in.

Printed by lanne Kjorlie
Courtesy of Crown Point Press

John Chiara (American, b. 1971)

24th at Carolina (Left, Center, Right), 2006

Three color photogravures on gampi paper chine collé
32 3/4 x 27 3/4 in. (left and right); 32 1/2 x 27 1/2 in. (center)

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2010.39.6.2a, c, e

Katsura Funakoshi (Japanese, b. 1951)

Before the Moon Rises, 1998

Color-manipulated aquatint with spit-bite aquatint, aquatint, and drypoint
51 3/4 x 41 in.

Printed by Daria Sywulak
1999.90.6.3

Sol LeWitt (American, 1928–2007)

Not Straight Lines, 2003

Portfolio of six hard-ground etchings
Each 10 x 10 in.

Printed by Case Hudson
2006.44.7.14.1–6

Tom Marioni (American, b. 1937)

Nest, 2012

Soft-ground etching printed in black and yellow
26 3/4 x 23 1/2 in.

Printed by lanne Kjorlie
Courtesy of Crown Point Press

Julie Mehretu (American, b. Ethiopia, 1970)

Diffraction, 2005

Color sugar-lift aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, and hard-ground etching on gampi paper chine collé
35 1/2 x 46 3/4 in.

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2006.44.9.2

Chris Ofili (English, active Trinidad, b. 1968)

Rainbow—Blue Friends, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in blue

Rainbow—Brown Bathers, 2008

Color spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in brown on blue gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Green Riann, 2008

Color spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed on gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Grey Seale, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in graphite on blue gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Orange Ramo, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in orange on blue gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Paragon Pink, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in green on pink gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Pink Particles, 2008

Drypoint printed in red on gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Purple Palms, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in blue on yellow gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Red Cave, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint, flat-bite etching, and drypoint

printed in red

Rainbow—Turquoise Duo, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in blue on gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Violet Narcissus, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in purple on gampi paper chine collé

Rainbow—Yellow Day Dreamer, 2008

Spit-bite aquatint and drypoint printed in orange on yellow gampi paper chine collé

Each 20 x 15 in.

Printed by Catherine Brooks
2010.39.13.2–13

Ed Ruscha (American, b. 1937)

Desert Gravure, 2006

Photogravure

21 1/4 x 24 3/4 in.

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2006.94.2

Your Space Gravure, 2006

Photogravure, color aquatint, and hard-ground etching on gampi paper chine collé

28 1/2 x 21 in.

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2006.94.4

Kiki Smith (American, b. Germany, 1954)

Still, 2006

Color spit-bite aquatint, flat-bite etching, soft-ground etching, and hard-ground etching on gampi paper chine collé

26 1/2 x 31 in.

Printed by Emily York
2010.39.17.2

Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)

Tide Figures, 2006

Color drypoint and hard-ground etching on gampi paper chine collé
39 3/4 x 30 1/2 in.

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2010.39.19.7

Richard Tuttle (American, b. 1941)

Deep, in the Snow, 2005

Wall construction of a large intaglio print with wooden supporting slat and a copper basket containing twelve smaller intaglio prints
32 x 28 x 3 3/4 in.

Printed by Dena Schuckit
2010.39.20

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