

# Crown Point Press

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*1962-2022: A Celebration: 60 Prints for 60 Years*

September 15 – November 17, 2022

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*1962-2022: A Celebration: 60 Prints for 60 Years*, currently on view in the Crown Point Gallery, celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of Crown Point Press. Over the years, since 1962, the Press has been located in four cities



John Cage, *Dereau No. 26*, 1985

in the San Francisco Bay Area: Berkeley, Richmond, Oakland, and San Francisco. It has published prints by 116 artists and Kathan Brown, the founding director, still comes to work regularly. *60 Prints for 60 Years* is a testament to printmaking, to the artists who created the prints, and to the Crown Point staff who make their work possible.

Though the prints on view are part of a larger whole, they provide a sense of Crown Point's history over the past 60 years. Categorized by decades, the exhibited 1960s prints are by Wayne Thiebaud, Richard Diebenkorn, and Robert Bechtle. These artists' etchings were the first published by Crown Point Press and they include three images from

*41 Etchings Drypoints* (1964) by Richard Diebenkorn; three images from the bound book, *Delights* (1965) by Wayne Thiebaud; and four etchings from 1967 by Robert Bechtle.

In the late 1950s, Kathan Brown studied at the London Central School of Arts and Crafts, and it was there that she became enamored of etching. During an end-of-term vacation in Scotland, she admired an old etching press in the backyard of the rooming house where she and her friends were staying. The landlady gave Brown the press, and she took it home on a freighter from Glasgow to San Francisco through the Panama Canal. It was 1959. Brown set up the press in a friend's studio, and used it along with a few artist friends. In 1962, she moved, with the press, to Richmond, California and started Crown Point there. Her equipment was a typewriter and a hand-cranked etching press. She worked alone with her toddler son underfoot, helping artists make prints. A friend brought Richard Diebenkorn to her workshops, and Crown Point published 41 of his etchings in 1964.

Crown Point moved from its Richmond studio to Brown's Berkeley home basement in 1964. In 1971, she formed an alliance with the New York publisher Parasol Press and Crown Point moved from her Berkeley basement to a loft space in downtown Oakland. Through Parasol Press, Brown began working with New York artists Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden, and others who would later be seen as key members of the Minimal art movement. Then, in 1977, Crown Point shifted its emphasis back to its own publishing program, and began working with a group of mainly conceptual artists including Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, Tom Marioni, Hans Haacke, and John Cage. Prints on view from this period include *Tiffany Cares* by Haacke, *Diecimila* by Burden, and an early portfolio, *Landing*, by Marioni. Vito Acconci's *Two Wings for Wall and Person* is also in the exhibition. It is in the building's lower level gallery along with a group of other large-scale prints.

Though Crown Point has generally concentrated on etching, the Press also conducted a program between 1982 and 1989 in which two or three artists a year traveled to Kyoto, Japan, to work with printer Tadashi Toda to make woodblock prints. That program led to a similar one in China; it began in 1986. Both woodcut programs ended in 1989, the year a major earthquake hit San Francisco. The Crown Point premises had

moved from Oakland to San Francisco in 1986, and its building was destroyed by the quake. In 1990, Crown Point opened its gallery and etching studio at 20 Hawthorne Street in San Francisco.

Crown Point Press celebrated its 25th birthday with an exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and its 35th in 1997 with exhibitions at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. In 2012, at the 50th anniversary of the Press, Kathan Brown published her memoir, *Know That You Are Lucky*, and the exhibition *Yes, No, Maybe: Artists Working at Crown Point Press* opened at the National Gallery. It featured 125 working proofs and final prints by 25 artists who worked at Crown Point Press from 1972 through 2010. Crown Point's archives are owned by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

In 2022, Crown Point has a staff of six. Its business has been radically changed by technology, but its means of production has not changed. Artists still draw on copper plates, and printers still ink and print them by hand. In 1965, Richard Diebenkorn drew a woman's face on a plate and in 2016 Jacqueline Humphries, working at the same table, integrated emojis with abstraction. She said she was thinking about the plates, not the prints, "The plates make the print." *60 Prints for 60 Years* exhibits the creative work of artists, the mastery of printers, and the timelessness of two printmaking media: etching and woodcut.

*60 Prints for 60 Years* is on view September 15 – November 17, 2022. The gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 9-5. If you would like to visit on a Saturday, please call in advance to schedule an appointment.