

Crown Point Press Release

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Contemporary Scenes: Cityscape & Landscape

September 7 – November 17, 2023



Laura Owens
Untitled (LO 425), 2010

SAN FRANCISCO, CA: Crown Point Press announces *Contemporary Scenes: Cityscape & Landscape*, an exhibition featuring prints by Darren Almond, Mamma Andersson, Robert Bechtle, John Chiara, Tony Cragg, Jane Freilicher, Yvonne Jacquette, Per Kirkeby, Joan Nelson, Tom Marioni, Jockum Nordström, Laura Owens, Ed Ruscha, Pat Steir and Wayne Thiebaud.

The landscape genre has a long history in art and is still relevant to many contemporary artists today. Artists continually reframe relationships to the planet through their expressions of real and imagined landscapes. Jockum Nordström, Laura Owens and Per Kirkeby have painted imagined scenes, while Ed Ruscha and Darren Almond have used photography to capture the real world around us.

These days, it is hard not to think of the changing climate in urban centers and rural places; art often reflects the zeitgeist of the time. San Francisco-based photographer John Chiara's photogravure *Mission at 1st* (2016) captures the Salesforce Tower as it was being built; it is now the tallest building in the city, and has changed the San Francisco skyline forever. In Chiara's print, the tower rises against a pink-red sky; his choice of colors was prescient of the wildfire-orange skies of San Francisco in 2020.

New York-based painter Joan Nelson made the etching, *Untitled #1*, in 1995. She said she had learned at art school, "You could paint anything. What mattered was the attitude." Her approach to painting is to refer to landscapes from throughout art history, and to incorporate her own mediated experience. In this etching, the limbless trees represent man's encroachment into nature yet the full foliage in the background creates a sense of optimism.

Sometimes the view from across the street is more straightforward. Robert Bechtle's softground etching, *Three Houses on Pennsylvania Avenue* (2011) is as the title suggests, what we see is what we get: a quiet street lined by three houses and parked cars. Alternatively, Pat Steir's print *Mountain in Rain* is evocatively abstract and poetically meditative: green, gestural paint strokes and large shapes resemble a mountain while blue drops suggest the rain.

In the large soft ground etching by Laura Owens, *Untitled (LO 425)*, three moons bounce through a hilly, undulating landscape and seem to follow the viewer. Owens chose a pastel palette of pink, blue

and mauve inks, and the soft ground process makes it so the print appears almost like a color pencil drawing. There is a quiet exuberance in the swirling leaves and petals as they flutter throughout the moonlit landscape.

Swedish artist Jockum Nordström first visited Crown Point in 2008 when he made *House and Bugs*. The artist often plays with scale, and in this print, the landscape is flattened and filled with timeless characters. A one-legged man chops wood while a torso-less woman gestures at the sky. Three large bugs dance across the middle of the image. A man wearing a top hat sits at a desk. As in Owens print, the viewer is challenged to create a narrative from what is presented.

Contemporary Scenes: Cityscape & Landscape is an exhibition that presents ways in which artists of the 21st century engage with the ever-changing landscape, the precarious present, and the uncertain future. The exhibition is on view September 7 – November 17, 2023. Gallery hours are Monday – Friday, 9-5.