

Crown Point Press Release

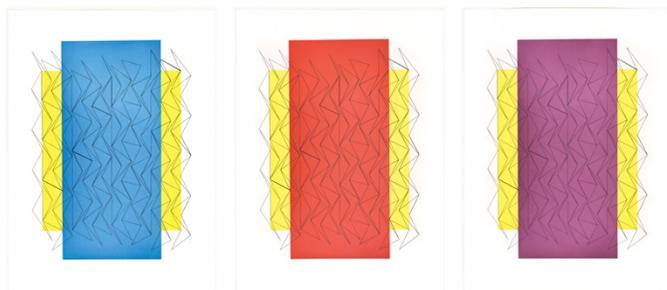
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Odili Donald Odita

Open Veil

January 13 – March 10, 2023



Bliss, a set of three aquatints with soft ground etching, edition 10

Crown Point Press announces the release of new etchings by Odili Donald Odita, who worked at Crown Point during the fall of 2022. During the two-week project the artist explored intaglio for the first time, and completed 15 etchings. Odita chose prints made at Crown Point by John Cage, Jacqueline Humphries, Robert Mangold, Shoichi Ida and Sherrie Levine to accompany his exhibition, *Open Veil*.

Odita was born in 1966 in Enugu, Nigeria. Shortly after the outbreak of the Biafran War in 1967, he and his family fled the violence targeting the Igbo, their ethnic group, and immigrated to Columbus, Ohio. Odita's early experience as a Nigerian émigré in suburban America created a duality that informs all his art. In an interview for *ARTnews*, Odita said that in his artwork, he is "fusing these two realities—an African reality with an American reality—together, representing these two different sides within this one space, called the painting."

Odita uses the juxtaposition and repetition of color and geometry as elements to unify space in his paintings and wall installations. He mixes his own color palette, and tries not to use the same color more than once. Shapes are demarcated by straight lines, triangles are elongated and skewed, chevrons run tangentially across a color field. Odita has said, "For me, the abstract is not something that I can say is unreal ... for me, abstraction is a means of getting to the real in the most direct way."

Odita organized the fifteen etchings he completed into two sets of three prints titled *Bliss* and *Deep*, and one set of four prints titled *Net*. The remaining are presented as single prints. Odita used the same key plate in each print: vertical, syncopated lines were drawn using soft ground and printed in black in some of the prints, and in the others, in white. He used aquatint to create gem-like color fields of purple, blue, magenta, and yellow. Odita said in a recent conversation, "Colors refer to literary and aesthetic suggestions of Black bodies and people of color (purple, blue, and deep red)."

In the set of three prints titled *Bliss*, black lines race up and down against red, blue and purple vertical rectangles; a yellow square hides behind each shape in the center of each image. The prints are celebratory, the lines vibrating in tempo against the space of color.

Odili Donald Odita is currently represented by Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles; and by Michael Stevenson Gallery, in Cape Town, South Africa. Since the early 2000s he has lived in Philadelphia and is Professor of Painting and Drawing at Tyler School of Art, Temple University. In 2007 he received the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant and in 2022 he was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. His work has been displayed internationally in both solo and group exhibitions, and is in the collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; Philadelphia Museum of Art; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Studio Museum, Harlem, among others. Large wall installations have been shown at the 52nd Venice Biennale; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco.