Nathan Oliveira
New Releases

Nathan Oliveira, *Leopard Seeking its Shadow*, 1998. Soft ground etching with drypoint, spit bite aquatint and aquatint. Paper size: 34¹/₂ x 41⁷/₈"; image size: 22 x 29⁷/₈". Edition 40. Printed by Dena Schuckit.

"Painters don't have that many subjects in a lifetime," Nathan Oliveira told me as he carefully polished out the nose of a springing leopard on a copper plate. "Is this a new subject?" He repeated my question and answered it: "Not exactly."

He remembered that in 1960 he did the running dog painting that is now in the Hirshhorn Museum, and pointed out that there was a running dog in his most recent show, at the John Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco last fall. He mentioned that he'd painted a lot of birds since the early 1970s, and those became in the '80s enormous paintings of wings. But the emergence of wild animals, like leopards and baboons, signals a special or renewed reflection on what Oliveira describes as "the whole human story."

"We're all connected, animals and humans," he says. "We're familiar with one another, companions in life. Sometimes we see ourselves in them."

For some time before coming to work at Crown Point Press this year, Oliveira was planning his project, which would follow from the baboons he did the last time he was here. He had animals in mind, the leopard in particular. But in the meantime he participated in our Live Model Group and became interested in drawing directly on plates from a model. He asked if he could have a model in the studio the first few days of the project. He began with the same processes he had used earlier, sugar lift aquatint with spit bite aquatint added after the drawing had been defined. After two days of this, he thought he had

enough. A different model had been planned for the next day, and we tried to cancel the appointment, but she didn't get the message. What a great stroke of luck!

Nathan Oliveira, *Missing Link*, 1998. Drypoint with spit bite aquatint. Paper size: 17⁷/₄ x 13³/₈"; image size: 11¹/₂ x 8". Edition 10. Printed by Dena Schuckit.

Copper Plate Nude 5

Copper Plate Nude 6

Nathan Oliveira, *Copper Plate Nudes 5 and 6*, 1998. A set of two spit bite aquatints with aquatint and texture from the backs of discarded plates. Paper size: 32³/₄ x 23¹/₄"; image size: 22 x 14¹/₂". Edition 25. Printed by Dena Schuckit.

Oliveira did some drawings with ink wash on paper, and then continuing the "feel" of the wash, decided to try painting directly with the acid as he reacted to the model, without using the sugar solution first. It's very hard to see what you're doing with spit bite and he had not much hope of success, so he began drawing on the backs of plates. Our copper is polished on one side, and the machine used for polishing leaves striations on the back, making it normally unusable. But somehow this texture provided the perfect foil for the beautiful, fluid figures Oliveira painted on it, the acid biting deeper where it puddled, combining with his eye and hand to create the ephemeral-seeming lovely creatures (not unlike animals) that you see before you.

—Kathan Brown

Nathan Oliveira: *Copper Plate Figures*
New releases and other printed works on paper
April 23 - May 30
Reception for the artist, May 7 from 6 - 8 p.m.

Nathan Oliveira: *Acqua*
Water Media Works on Paper 1958-1989
Wiegand Gallery, College of Notre Dame, Belmont, CA
through April 25

Copper Plate Nude 1
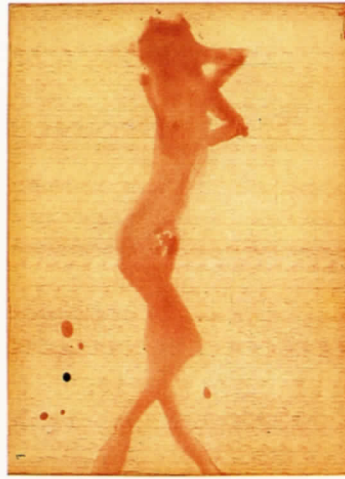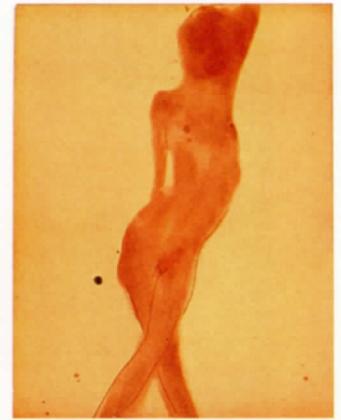

Copper Plate Nude 2

Copper Plate Nude 3

Copper Plate Nude 4

Nathan Oliveira, *Copper Plate Nudes 1 - 4*, 1998. A portfolio of four spit bite aquatints with aquatint and texture from the backs of discarded plates. Paper size: 32³/₄ x 23¹/₄"; image sizes vary. Edition 25. Printed by Dena Schuckit.

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