

# Overview

## On The Road With Crown Point

If you've been visiting museums around the country in recent years, it is likely you have seen exhibitions that included publications by Crown Point Press. In celebration of our 25th anniversary, The Museum of Modern Art in New York staged a show in their contemporary print room called *For 25 Years: Crown Point Press*. It included about 40 works, roughly one from each artist that we've published since 1977, and mostly donated by us to the museum to augment the Crown Point Press prints already there. This is a small but choice sampling of the work we've done over the years. Riva Castleman, director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, selected the prints and organized the exhibition. In the wall text accompanying the exhibition, Ms. Castleman noted "the superb craftsmanship and sensitivity of Kathan Brown and all those who have been associated with the many projects she has undertaken." The statement by Ms. Castleman also recognized Crown Point Press's contribution to the etching medium, stating: "When Brown founded Crown Point Press (named for a gold mine she saw in an old picture), intaglio techniques (etching, aquatint, engraving, etc.) were out of favor." Ms. Castleman also described Crown Point's Japanese woodblock project in which artists are invited to work in Kyoto with Tadashi Toda, a printer working in the tradition of Hiroshige and other 19th century Japanese printmakers.

*Committed to Print*, an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York early this year, contained Crown Point Press etchings by Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, and Hans Haacke. The exhibition focused on works with social and political themes, and the catalogue by Deborah Wye illustrated Acconci's *Bite the Bullet: Slow Guns for Quick Sale (To Be Etched on Your American Mind)*, Burden's *The Atomic Alphabet* and Haacke's *Tiffany Cares*.

Alex Katz has completed two etching projects at Crown Point Press as well as a woodblock print in Japan. Most of these were featured this winter in the Brooklyn Museum exhibition *Alex Katz: A Print Retrospective*. Organized by Barry Walker, Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum, the exhibition surveyed Katz etchings, lithographs, woodblocks, linocuts and screenprints made since 1955. In the catalogue essay, Walker



The Museum of Modern Art, New York

notes that "Alex Katz does not arrive at a printed image through spontaneous experimentation with the particular medium to see what it will produce. When he enters a printmaking situation, he has already determined what he wants and will bend the medium to his purposes. Unlike painters who see printmaking as a separate activity, Katz always views it in the context of his entire corpus of work. 'Prints are supposed to be, with my work, the final synthesis of a painting.'" The fully illustrated catalogue is available through Crown Point Press (see back page).

Helen Frankenthaler's *Cedar Hill*, a delicately colored woodblock print published by Crown Point Press in 1983, is illustrated on the cover of *A Graphic Muse*, a book by Richard S. Field and Ruth E. Fine that accompanies the exhibition of the same name. After its initial presentation at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts in October 1987, *A Graphic Muse* traveled to Yale University Art Gallery, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and will also be seen at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts before its final presentation at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. The exhibition includes a wide variety of prints by contemporary American women. Crown Point Press is well represented with, in addition to the

Frankenthaler woodblock, Joyce Kozloff's cast-paper module with inset etchings entitled *Homage to Robert Adam*, Judy Pfaff's woodblock print *Yoyogi II*, Dorothea Rockburne's *Locus No. 1* and *Locus No. 2* (etchings published by Parasol Press but printed at Crown Point Press) and Pat Steir's color etchings *Abstraction*, *Belief*, *Desire* and *The Tree After Hiroshige*.

Many of John Cage's etchings and monoprints were seen this winter in *John Cage: Fire Prints, Rock Prints* at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut. Cage prints, as well as those by Pat Steir and David True, were also included in *Recent Graphics from American Print Shops*, which premiered at the Mitchell Museum, Mt. Vernon, Illinois in 1986 and traveled to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

Francesco Clemente has been working with Crown Point Press since 1981 and over the years has produced an outstanding body of etchings and woodblock prints. Clemente's contribution to the field is recognized in *Francesco Clemente: The Graphic Work* which opened at the Milwaukee Art Museum this January and traveled to the St. Louis Art Museum. It will end its tour at the Museo Italo-Americano in San Francisco later this year. David True has

*continued on page 2*



## On The Road

*continued from front page*

also produced many etchings at Crown Point, some of which were included in the 1986 exhibitions *70's Into 80's: Print-making Now* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and *Public and Private: American Prints Today* at the Brooklyn Museum (which also included Crown Point publications by Richard Diebenkorn, Robert Kushner, Judy Pfaff, Pat Steir and William T. Wiley).

We can't mention all of the museum exhibitions that included Crown Point Press prints in recent years, there are just too many, but one that will occur this summer is particularly noteworthy. The Ville de Geneve Musee d'Art et Histoire, will present etchings by Pat Steir. Steir's artistic development can be traced through the remarkable body of prints she has been producing with Crown Point Press over the past decade. Many of these will be represented, along with several of the working proofs, and will become part of the permanent collection of the museum. A major catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

If you're an armchair traveler and didn't catch any of these exhibitions, you may have made a vicarious visit to Crown Point Press via the CBS News Sunday Morning show that aired last June 14. Charles Kuralt not only took viewers on a tour of the San Francisco gallery and studio but also featured Chuck Close's woodblock project in Kyoto, Japan.

Constance Lewallen



CBS News in Tadashi  
Toda's studio, Kyoto,  
with Chuck Close

## New Editions

Our 1987–88 publishing season had an energetic start when Judy Pfaff turned the San Francisco etching studio into a woodworking shop. The result is *Six of One...*, a series of six large-scale woodcuts, each an explosion of vibrant color and texture that recalls Pfaff's wall reliefs.

William Brice made his first Japanese-style woodblock print this year. Though *Kyoto* is an abstract image, it embodies the contemplative aura of a Japanese rock garden.

Three witty, vividly colorful etchings are the result of French conceptual artist Bertrand Lavier's visit to Crown Point Press's San Francisco studio. Ironically, they are called *Untitled Modern Painting Nos. 1, 2 and 3*. Lavier appropriated these generic painting images from a Disney comic strip depicting Mickey Mouse's visit to The Museum of Modern Art.

Alex Katz continued his exploration of



Alex Katz, *Reclining Figure*, 1987. Aquatint, 35 1/2 x 41 1/2", Edition 60.



Alex Katz, *Black Shoes*, 1987. Sugarlift, Aquatint, 22 1/2 x 29", Edition 60.



Shoichi Ida, *Between Vertical and Horizon—Descended Triangle—Triangle (Black)*, 1987. Aquatint, Softground, Drypoint, 50 1/2 x 40 1/2", Edition 12.

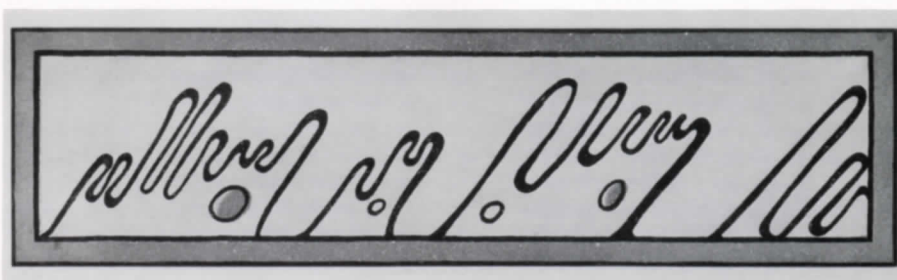


Pat Steir, *Waterfall*, 1988. Spitbite, Aquatint, Softground, Hardground and Drypoint, 54 x 41 3/4", Edition 50.

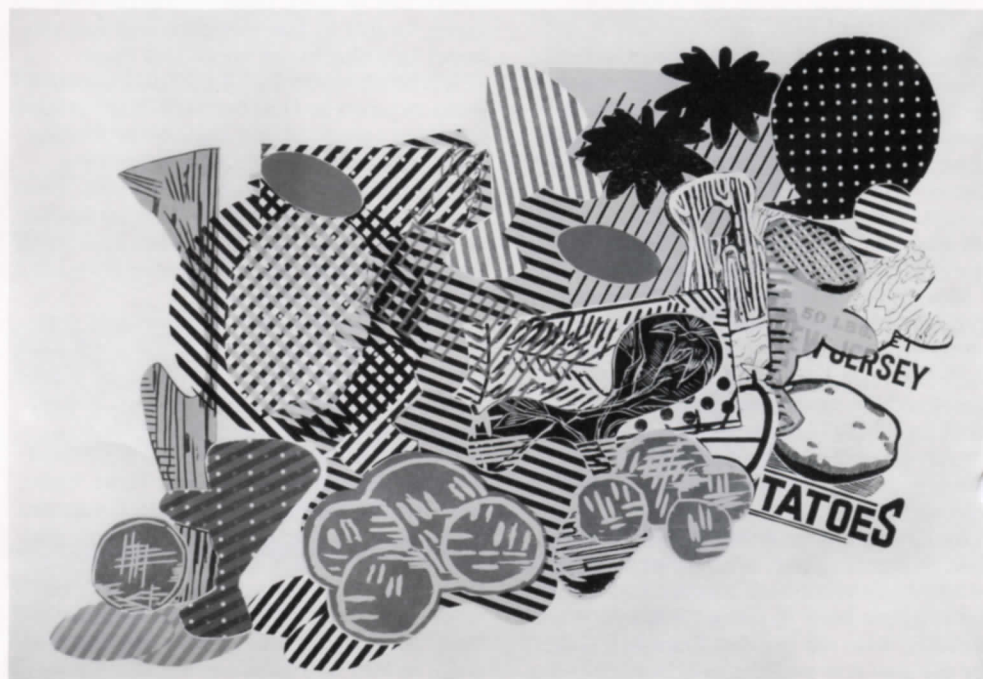




William Brice, *Kyoto*, 1987. Woodblock, 19 blocks, 7 colors, 41 × 28", Edition 100.



Bertrand Lavier, *Untitled Modern Painting No. 2*, 1987. Sugarlift, Aquatint, 18 3/4 × 50", Edition 25.



Judy Pfaff, *Six Of One (1-Tatoes)*, 1987. Color Woodcut, 43 × 63", Edition 15.



Robert Bechtle, *34th Avenue*, 1987. Softground etching, 30 3/4 × 34 1/4", Edition 50.

etching in *Reclining Figure* and two portraits of shod feet: *Black Shoes* and *Beach Sandals*. All three images are imbued with freshness and wit.

Robert Bechtle's three new photo-realist views of San Francisco's so-called Sunset District—*34th Avenue* is the largest of these—will find many admirers for the artist's virtuoso use of softground etching. And Pat Steir's *Waterfall* captures the essence of fast falling water without the depiction of mass.

Also of note, Shoichi Ida issued black and white states of his three large prints from the *Between Vertical and Horizon—Descended Triangle* series. The extremely fluid appearance of his rich spitbite aquatint becomes even more obvious in black and white than in color.



## Dear Friends,

*Overview* has a new look and a new editor—perhaps you noticed. We at Crown Point Press are delighted to have Connie Lewallen, formerly Associate Curator at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, working with us as Associate Director. *Overview* (this newsletter) and *View* (our interview series) are now being produced and guided by her, and she has a hand in planning our gallery exhibitions. She is also sharing some of the things I normally do, things to do with artists and generally with keeping things running smoothly here.

Our sales organization has a new look, too. Karen McCready, our Director, is still based in New York, but Stephanie Bleacher, who has been our New York Representative for four years, is moving to California in early May and will be the Senior Representative in our San Francisco Gallery. She will also be doing some traveling around the United States to meet with interested people who can't visit us in New York or San Francisco.

Working with Karen in New York are Kim Schmidt, who comes to us from the Laurence Miller Gallery there, and Meg Malloy, who has moved to New York from San Francisco where she worked at the Janet Steinberg Gallery. Also in New York we have a new Gallery Assistant, Joseph Thone; Nancy Tompkins has left us to go back to school.

In San Francisco, working with Stephanie, is Valerie Wade, who formerly worked as an art consultant with Szoke Koo in New York. (Gone back to school is Margaret Wrinkle, who ran our San Francisco Gallery for the past few months since Vandy Seeburg left to look after her new baby.)

Megan Armstrong, the Gallery Assistant in San Francisco, continues and is expanding her responsibilities to include giving group tours of the workshop and gallery.

You've probably noticed that we ended up with more people than we started with. The Crown Point staff is now up to 20, including me (from 17 a year ago). It is a rule of thumb of mine that our artist projects per year are equal in number to our staff, not including me. So we are planning to work with 19 artists this fiscal year (October 1, 1987, through September 30, 1988): five of these projects will be done in Japan, twelve in San Francisco and two (we hope) in China (more about that later).

William Brice and Richard Diebenkorn went to Japan in October. The Brice print has been editioned and signed; the Diebenkorn won't be ready to release until the summer. David Salle worked in Kyoto in December, and that print will be on display at the Art Fair in Chicago in May. Eric Fischl and April Gornik are doing projects in Japan in the month of April.

In San Francisco, we've completed projects with Alex Katz, Bertrand Lavier, Robert Bechtle and Pat Steir. As I write this, Wayne Thiebaud is working in the studio, and we hope there will be something of his to show you at the Art Fair. We have Edward Ruscha, William T. Wiley, Jose Maria Sicilia, Sean Scully, Nancy Graves, Tony Cragg and Anish Kapoor scheduled between now and October. Also, there is still a lot of production work going on in the studio with the large project Judy Pfaff did last September. Both our galleries will be showing the Pfaff work in May and June.

We've taken some more space in our

building in San Francisco, on the second floor at the back, just underneath the gallery area. The printers have room down there to spread out very large prints, like the Pfaffs, and there is also an "open" storage area. Now everything we've ever published is accessible, and a client who wants to see a lot of prints can work comfortably down there with one of our gallery people and not disturb the exhibition space at all.

China! I'm on my way in a couple of weeks to Beijing for the third time in five months. It looks like we're going to be able to set up a woodblock print program there similar to what we're doing in Japan (this is in addition to Japan, not instead of). The process is somewhat different, and the situation is very different, but the quality of the work and the excitement of the experience are both terrific.

We're working with Rong Bai Jai, a hand-printing company that's been in the same location near The Forbidden City for 300 years. Now it's a commune, with quite a few workers, old and young, carving and printing mostly reproductions of ancient Chinese brush paintings. They've never printed a Western image before, but they're willing to work with us and our artists. We've done two small "test" images (by Francesco Clemente and Tom Marioni), and this trip we'll be trying to produce a full-blown color print with Robert Bechtle, who will be making the trip with me.

I'm very excited about this China project—I've even been taking some Chinese language lessons. After many trips to Japan (which I love and appreciate), I am finding China quite thrilling, if somewhat unmanageable. It is in many ways the opposite of Japan, yet at the same time is Japan's roots. The technique of woodblock printing practiced at Rong Bai Jai is the technique that 19th century Japanese craftsmen based their work upon. The Japanese changed it to make it, generally speaking, easier to control in editioning and brighter in color; something quite distinct evolved in Japan, and was handed down from father to son, individual craftsmen. At Rong Bai Jai we have a group operation that is, in a way, similar to our teamwork in San Francisco in the etching studio. The process itself is very ancient and very beautiful. And China! What a fantastic place to explore from the inside, not as a tourist but with work to do.

You'll be hearing more about the China project when we get back. Meanwhile, see you in Chicago at the Fair (or in San Francisco, or in New York...!)

All best regards,

Kathan Brown  
President, Crown Point Press

In The Forbidden City



## New Books

Crown Point Press offers a selection of books, catalogs and other literature about the artists we work with. We also publish VIEW, a series of interviews featuring artists, one at a time, talking about their work. We have three new VIEWS—William Brice, Elaine deKooning and David True. The listed publications include all available VIEW issues and the most recent additions to our book collection. All our publications are available at both gallery locations and also by mail from the San Francisco gallery. If you would like a complete list of the publications we carry, just send in the form.

All VIEW interviews are available individually for \$4. Interviews comprising Volumes III and IV are available individually or as a boxed set for \$15.

Vito Acconci  
Robert Barry  
Iain Baxter  
Daniel Buren  
John Cage  
Elaine deKooning\*  
Howard Fried  
Terry Fox  
Joan Jonas  
Jannis Kounellis  
Robert Kushner  
Tom Marioni  
Pat Steir  
William T. Wiley

*Volume III*  
Bryan Hunt  
Brice Marden  
Joyce Kozloff  
Joel Fisher  
Italo Scanga  
Francesco Clemente  
*Volume IV*  
Robert Bechtle  
Hamish Fulton  
Tom Holland  
Gunter Brus  
William Brice\*  
David True\*

\*New

*Richard Diebenkorn, Etchings & Drypoints, 1949–1980*, Houston Fine Art Press, 1981. Essays by Mark Stevens and Kathan Brown. Hardcover, \$35. Softcover (Supply Limited), \$25.

*Richard Diebenkorn, Small Paintings from Ocean Park*, essay by Dore Ashton and preface by George Neubert. Published by Hine Inc. and Houston Fine Art Press. Softcover, \$14.

*Richard Diebenkorn, Works on Paper*, essay by Richard Newlin. Published by Houston Fine Art Press, 1987. Hardcover, \$65.

*How To Identify Prints*, by Bamber Gascoigne. Published by Thames and Hudson Inc., 1986. Hardcover, \$40.

*Alex Katz: A Print Retrospective*, essay by Barry Walker. Published for the Brooklyn Museum by Burton Skira, Inc., 1987. Softcover, \$18.

*Wayne Thiebaud*, by Karen Tsujimoto. Published for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by the University of Washington Press. Softcover, \$19.95.

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