

Overview

Dear Friends,

On June 4, having just flown from China to Japan, and settled into the sparseness and calmness of the Tawaraya Inn in Kyoto, I turned on the television and saw body after youthful bloody body being hauled by bicycle out of the tumult of Tiananmen Square. Shock and bitterness crowded against the lovely sweetness of the trip, which had been so alive, so filled with a feeling of alertness as people rushed out of houses and shops to applaud student demonstrators as they passed!

"If we don't speak out, it is not worth your feeding us," said a flyer I brought back and had translated. "You pay for us to be educated, and we feel we owe this to you. Deng Xiao Ping is a great man but his time is over. We are marching because we have two wishes:

Wish #1—The *People's Daily* should admit that the student movement is not anti-government. Please look at Hangzhou, Beijing, every other city, how the people support us. We believe history will make the correct judgment.

Wish #2—We want to talk to the government about corruption. Why don't the people have the right to speak to the government? Why do we have to kow-tow to the ground?

We know that students' duty is to study, but with the country in this way, how can we study? And with the country in this way, how can we use our knowledge?"

The clarity and innocence of this has surely changed to bitterness by now, and what that bitterness will bring is hard to tell. But, despite it, I don't want to give up going to China, working with our friends there. This trip, even apart from the charged atmosphere brought by the demonstrations, was really a dream.

Janis Provisor, the artist whom I accompanied, worked on three projects in three places, and all were different and all successful. Problems that we had before fell away; there was a rapport, an engagement; art was really being made. I have another trip planned in November, with two artists, Robert Kushner and Li Lin Lee. Just before our last trip at the end of May we printed an announcement of our program in China. Some of you saw it at the Chicago Art Fair, but because of the disastrous events we didn't mail it. Now that we've decided to continue,



Students handing out flyers in Hangzhou.



Cai Yan (Master Printer), Yang Yung Hua (Coordinator / Translator) and Janis Provisor at work.

here it is, enclosed with this newsletter. The next time I write you, "Dear Friends," I will have returned from the November trip; that will be the time, I think, to really talk about China.

In the meantime, we are busy in San Francisco, working on two new Wayne Thiebaud prints and expecting Al Held very soon. Al will be signing the editions of *Putu* and *Almost There*. We had to shorten the edition size of *Putu* because of plate wear, but Al is starting two more prints similar to that one, and we plan that those of you who ordered *Putu* and couldn't get it will be offered first chance at the new ones.

Tim Rollins + K.O.S. will be working in late August, and John Cage will be back again right after that. In the first part of October Connie Lewallen is going to Japan with Al Held and José Maria Sicilia, and at the end of the month Gary Stephan will be working in the etching studio. We have Markus Raetz scheduled to be working in San Francisco in November.

You'll be hearing from us again in December or January.

All best regards,

Kathan Brown
President, Crown Point Press

Notes

Stephanie Bleecher, our Senior Sales Representative in San Francisco, is continuing to present Crown Point Press publications in various cities around the country. October 19 to 21 she will visit the Percival Gallery in Des Moines, Iowa and the University of Iowa in Iowa City. A special event at the Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art is scheduled for November 17 and 18, and in December Stephanie will bring new prints to Flanders Contemporary Art in Minneapolis. If you wish more information about these events or would be interested in scheduling an event in your area, please contact Stephanie at our San Francisco address.

Our San Francisco gallery has joined others in the city in remaining open until 8:00 pm the first Thursday of every month. Special receptions are held on these evenings and often coincide with exhibition openings.

This year John Cage is the recipient of the Kyoto Prize in Creative Arts and Moral Sciences. This prestigious annual award is sponsored by the Japanese Inamori Foundation in recognition of outstanding contributions to the cultural, scientific and spiritual betterment of mankind. Fia, Inc., Kyoto, will present a retrospective selection of Cage's etchings published by Crown Point Press in November to coincide with the awards ceremony.

New Editions

Early this year we released Pat Steir's *Kweilin Dreaming, Part A*, a hand-painted woodblock print made in the People's Republic of China. The artist has now completed *Part B*, a second group of prints hand-painted on the same woodblock matrix. *Part B* is characterized by colorful staccato brushmarks that echo those found on the woodblock printed lower portion of the page. The distribution and color of the marks vary from print to print.

Wayne Thiebaud returned once again to our studio to continue working on two prints he started during previous visits. The larger of the two, *Steep Street*, a spitbite aquatint, is one of the most colorful of the artist's cityscapes. Thiebaud's characteristic response to the hilly terrain of San Francisco blends realism, caricature and abstraction. In *Steep Street*, the exaggerated vertical of the central street is tempered by the soft-edged curves of the surrounding countryside. The scene is enriched by such details as a palm tree, church cupola and T.V. antenna. The artist also created a second version of the image without color, *Steep Street—Black and Grey Van*, a small color drypoint in black and orange, depicts a minibus at the crest of a steep road just as it begins its descent. The dark road contrasting with the lighter sky suggests that nightfall approaches.

Now Who's Got the Blue Prints, the title of a new softground etching by William Wiley, is a play on the title of his large and ambitious 1983 etching, *Now Heres That Blame Treaty*. For this new work, Wiley reworked an earlier plate (which was originally made for his 1979 etching *Nowhere's That Blame Treaty*).

The 1983 etching is considerably lighter than the 1979 version as a result of the artist's burnishing the plate on and off over a period of four years. For the most recent variation, Wiley burnished the plate still further, increasing the effect of bright light streaming through the studio window which serves as the fulcrum in this related series of works.

Now Whos Got the Blue Prints, as the title suggests is printed in blue ink and contains red lines as well. Even lighter than its predecessor, it also contains several new elements, most notably a window-like area in the upper right corner framing a drawing of a boat. The print contains a rich variety of Wiley's familiar imagery—animals, a skeleton, a small Buddha and a large artist's palette—punctuated with phrases from the daily news.

Wiley used this same plate for a hand-worked series of *Now Heres That Blame Treaty*, this time printed in black ink. The boat appears again in this permutation, although the square enclosing it is absent. Other objects, such as a cone, a pacifier and a bell, come and go from print to print in this lively, often colorful series of unique prints.

Torturer is a small softground etching printed in blue, depicting an image of a tool-

shed that doubles as a torture box. A mask adorns the exterior of the structure, on which is written "I'm just doin my job." The bitterly humorous "Song of the Torturer" that Wiley composed for this print is written along the bottom edge.

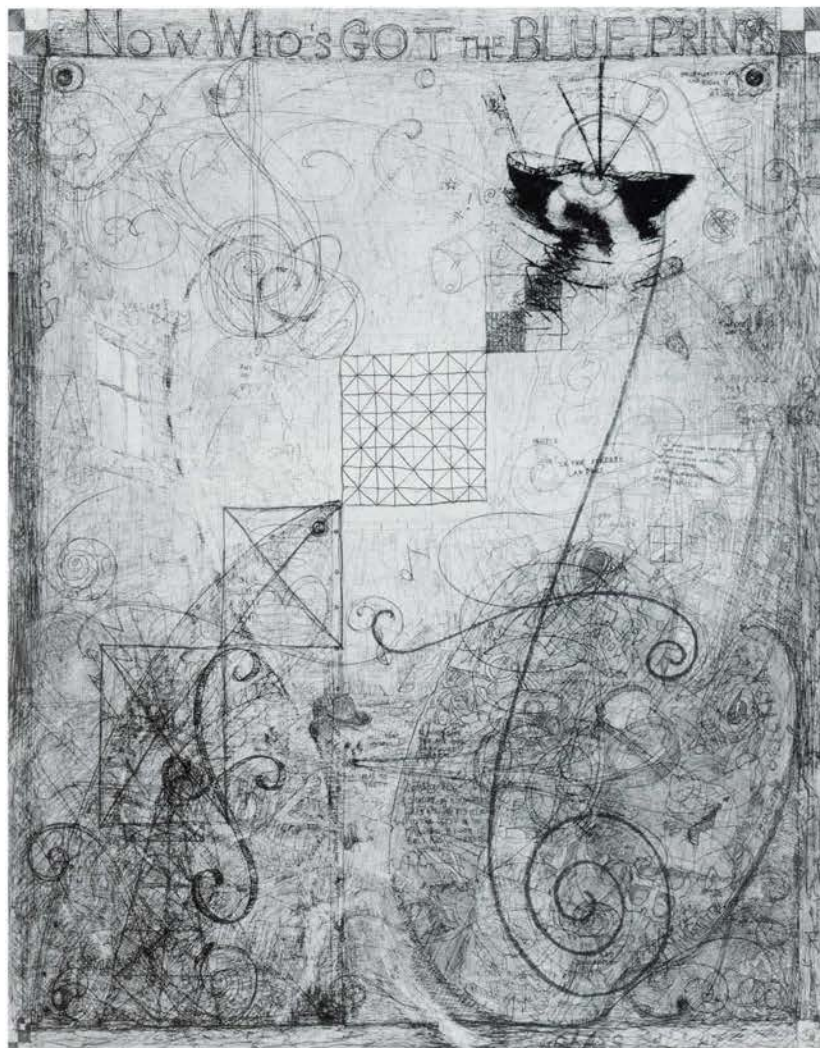
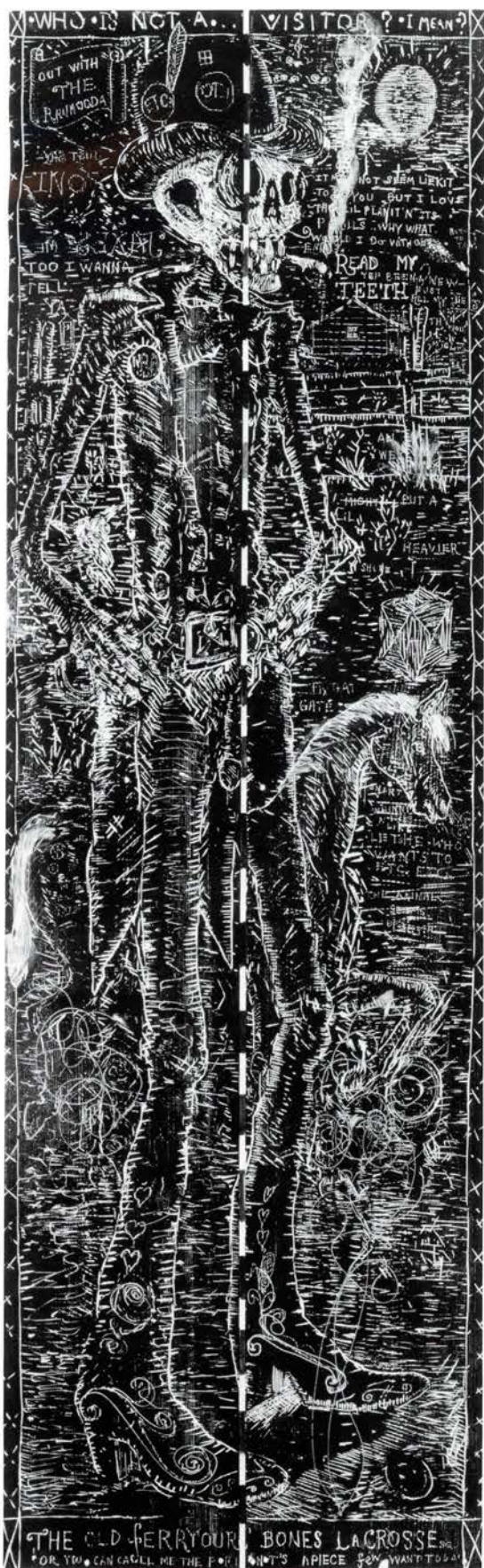
The final work Wiley completed this year is *Mr. Bones*, a large vertical woodcut on which is carved the image of a skeleton dressed in cowboy garb. Wiley used two planks from a bookcase for the blocks, leaving a gap between them down the center of the print. Each impression in this hand-colored series is printed on rice paper. The words that appear throughout the prints relate to political events.

We will be exhibiting Wiley's new editions as well as many of his earlier etchings in our San Francisco and New York galleries from September 7 through October 14. An illustrated brochure containing an interview with the artist is available in our galleries as well as a few remaining copies of *VIEW: William T. Wiley* (an interview with the artist conducted in 1979). Each is \$5.00.

To order the brochure or *VIEW*, please send a check or money order for \$6.00 (\$7.00 outside the U.S.) to our San Francisco address. —C.L.

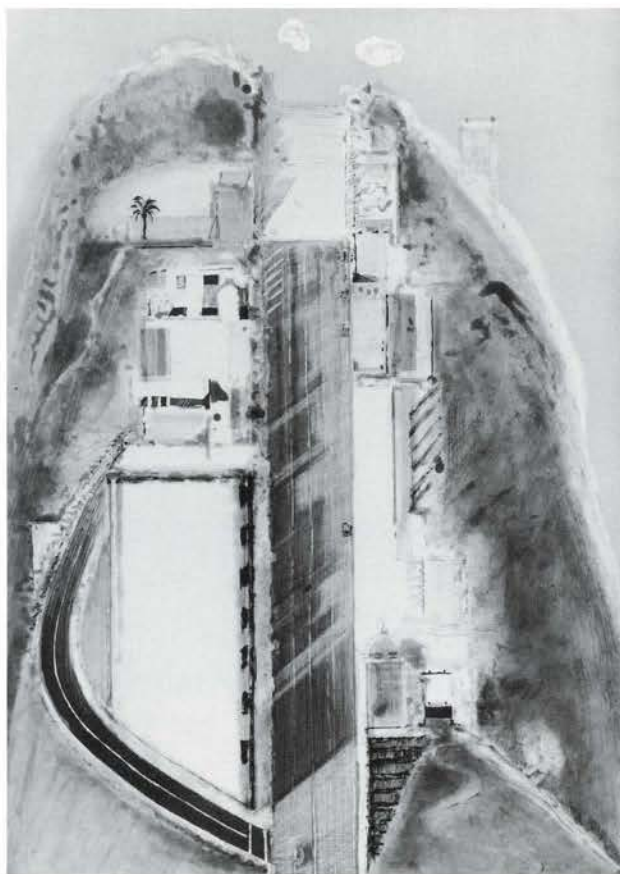


William T. Wiley, *Torturer*, 1989, color softground etching, 19 x 15", edition 25.



William T. Wiley, *Now Who's Got the Blue Prints*, 1989, color aquatint with softground etching, burnishing and drypoint, $52\frac{1}{4} \times 41\frac{1}{2}$ ", edition 25.

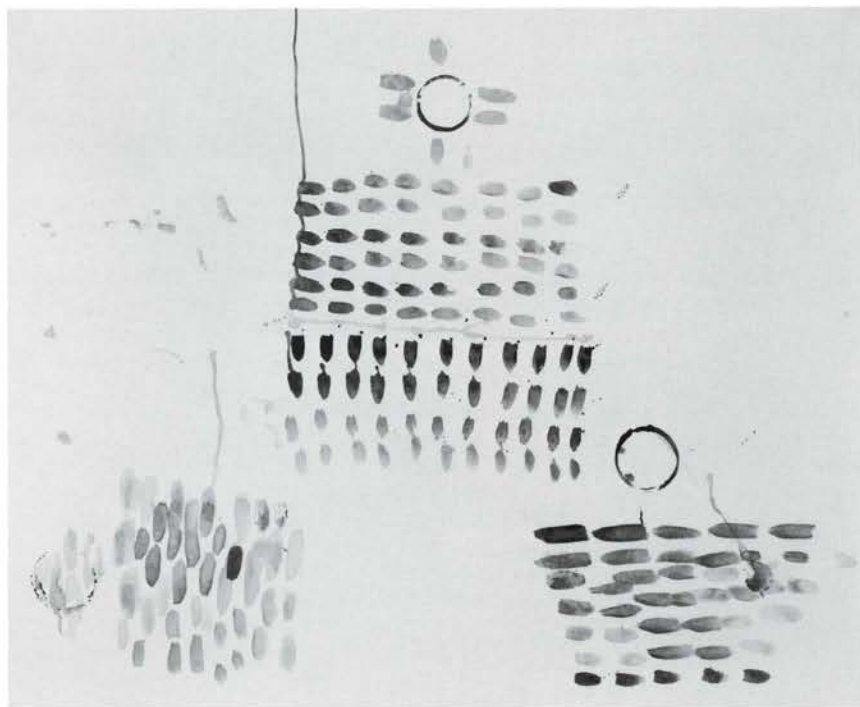
William T. Wiley, *Mr. Bones*, 1989, woodcut with hand-coloring, $76\frac{1}{4} \times 25$ ", edition 25.



Wayne Thiebaud, *Steep Street—Black and Grey*, 1989, spitbite aquatint and drypoint, 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", edition 30.



Wayne Thiebaud, *Van*, 1989, drypoint, 17 × 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", edition 50.



Pat Steir, *Kweilin Dreaming, Part B (#1)*, 1989, hand-painted color woodblock print on silk chine collé, 37 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 42 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

Print Terminology

Print terminology can be confusing. What is the difference between an *Artist's Proof* and a *Trial Proof*? What is a *Working Proof*? Although people in the field generally agree on the meanings of such designations, many confusions still exist. So, we thought we would define these terms according to how we use them at Crown Point Press.

When we speak of an edition, we refer to the signed and numbered impressions of a particular image, exclusive of proofs. Historically, in intaglio media, the size of an edition was determined by the limitations of the process, since etched lines noticeably deteriorate under the extreme pressure of the printing press. Even after the modern perfection and broad acceptance of steel-facing (the deposit by electrolysis of a very fine coating of steel on a copper plate), which helps slow plate deterioration, dry-point lines and aquatint in combination with certain pigments will only withstand a limited amount of wear. Once, during the printing of a four-color etching by Sol LeWitt that had been announced as an edition of twenty-five, Kathan Brown noticed signs of wear on the copper plates and stopped the presses after only eight impressions had been struck. And just recently, we had to severely limit the number of impressions of Al Held's new aquatint, "Putu," because certain spitbite areas weakened rapidly. The woodblock is much sturdier, however, and can provide thousands of impressions.

Another determinant of edition size is a practical assessment of demand. At Crown Point we don't want to print more impressions of an image than the market can absorb in a reasonable period. Also, time is a factor, and printing is labor intensive. Most contemporary workshops and publishers, including ourselves, would rather devote their time and energy to a diversity of images rather than a long run of a single image. Lastly, an artist might request that an edition be limited to a certain number, usually because he or she is anxious to return to do more work once the inventory of previous editions has been depleted.

Most etching editions published by Crown Point number around twenty-five, and none have ever exceeded sixty. The edition number might be as high as 200, however, in our Japanese woodblocks (and will probably average seventy-five to a hundred in our Chinese woodblock program). Not only are large editions traditional in the Japanese and Chinese woodblock, but for a single image an artist creates, up to two weeks of proofing is necessary. An artist working in our etching studio for two weeks, on the other hand, typically will create several images, and in the end the same number of individual impressions will be produced as in a single woodblock edition.

The practice of numbering editions dates



Robert Bechtle with printer Brian Shure signing *Potrero Houses—Pennsylvania Avenue*.

from the later nineteenth century. The edition size is represented as the denominator of a fraction that appears in the lower margin of a print. The numerator of the fraction is a serial number for that particular impression. Historically, the numbering corresponded to the order in which the prints were pulled, and because of gradual plate deterioration, the lower numbered prints were considered more desirable. Today, the number does not correspond to the actual order in which the prints are pulled, but simply identifies the order in which the prints are numbered by the artist as he or she signs the edition. The artist's signature, the title and date of the print, as well as the edition number, appear in pencil in the lower margin. Sometimes the artist prefers that this information be noted on the reverse side. By signing each print, the artist identifies it as his or her own work and approves its final appearance. Numbered prints are called *Edition Prints*.

In addition to the numbered *Edition Prints*, each image will also have a number of proofs. At Crown Point Press, we normally make ten *Artist's Proofs* which are equally divided between the artist and the press. Each printer (usually there are three assigned to each project) receives one of the proofs, one belongs to Kathan Brown and the fifth to the Crown Point Press archive. In our larger woodblock editions, we print between ten and twenty *Artist's Proofs* which, again, are equally divided between the artist and Crown Point Press. The *Artist's Proofs* are signed "A.P. 1", "A.P. 2", etc. (or A.P. 1 / 10, A.P. 2 / 10, etc.), in the lower margin of the print. *Artist's Proofs* do not differ from the

rest of the edition (unlike *Trial Proofs* which may vary). For monoprints, hand-colored editions or other variations from the ordinary, we sometimes designate A.P.'s from the numbered prints. In such cases we may use letters or numbers. A related series of images are treated as a group and are numbered successively, even though each print is unique. In all such atypical cases, we attempt to find the clearest method of notation.

At some point during the artist's working process, a *Working Proof* becomes the *O.K. to Print* (called by some publishers *Bon à Tirer*—B.A.T.—or *Right to Print*). The *O.K. to Print* is the proof that the artist signs while in residence to indicate that it is the standard against which all other prints in the edition will be measured. The *O.K. to Print* is retained by the archive except in the woodblock editions when it is kept by the printer. The *O.K. to Print* looks like a *Working Proof* rather than a finished print—the size of the margins are probably different from those of the rest of the edition and they often contain fingerprints or notes or other marks of the working process.

What exactly is a *Working Proof*? During the proofing process, the printers will pull many proofs to check the progress of a print. These *Working Proofs* are usually not signed and are almost never sold, but an artist might wish to retain some for his own use, and a few that hold particular interest might become part of the Crown Point Press archive. Most are destroyed at the termination of a project. Those that are not destroyed are numbered in chronological order on the

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Print Terminology



Printer Lawrence Hamlin wiping a plate.

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front or the back of the print. We began listing *Working Proofs* on the print documentation in 1986. Sometimes, an artist might wish to save a *Working Proof*; perhaps it represents an important stage in the development of the image or perhaps it came close to what the artist wanted but for some reason was not chosen as the *O.K. to Print*. Such proofs are called *State Proofs*. If there are several, one will be saved for the Crown Point Press archive and the others will become the property of the artist. Occasionally *State Proofs* are sold.

Once the artist arrives at an *O.K. to Print*, the printers will try to pull three *Trial Proofs* while the artist is still in residence. In so doing, they make sure they can duplicate the *O.K. to Print*, mixing the colors exactly the same and registering the print correctly. If all goes well, the artist will sign the three T.P.'s (T.P.A, B and C) so that he or she can have one (T.P.A) right away; our San Francisco and New York galleries use T.P.B and T.P.C to show clients or exhibit before the edition is finally printed (editioning is very time-consuming and will not be completed until several months following the artist's residency). During the editioning, the printers will try to make at least one extra print, which will be designated as a T.P., so that we will have an even number of T.P.'s to be divided between Crown Point and the artist. If there are a few extra impressions, they might be designated as additional T.P.'s to be divided between the artist and the press. *Trial Proofs* may be identical to the rest of the edition or may contain some minor flaws. All irregularities and the final number and disposition of all proofs are noted in the

documentation information that every purchaser receives.

Briefly, then, for each image that Crown Point editions, there will be: *Working Proofs* which are not identical to the edition and are not usually signed or sold; an *O.K. to Print* which serves as the printers' guide in printing the edition and later becomes a part of the Crown Point Press archive; signed and lettered *Trial Proofs* which may differ slightly from the edition but can be sold; and *Artist's Proofs*, which are the same as the edition and frequently sold. *Artist's Proofs* are sold at the same price as *Edition Prints*. There may also be some *State Proofs*, which in some cases are offered for sale. In general, we try to limit the types of proof designations for simplicity and clarity.

Once the edition has been printed and signed at Crown Point Press, the printers cut up the plates for scrap or cancel the plate by cutting off a corner to ensure that it cannot be reused for the same print. Occasionally a plate, if it has particular importance or unusual technical interest, might be saved for the archive, but it will be cancelled in any case. Our printer in Japan destroys the woodblocks, and Crown Point Press takes possession of the blocks used for the prints made in China, if they are not destroyed there.

Sometimes an artist sees a way to extend an image created for a previous edition and requests us to save the plate so he can rework it later and perhaps produce another edition of that image in a new state. If that happens, we note it on the documentation sheet. A print is considered as existing in a different state each time the plate is altered and then used for additional impressions, and if an earlier state exists, it is always indi-

cated on the documentation of the later state. Thus, in "Straits of Malacca II," Al Held added lines to the hardground plate used in the first state of the print. William Wiley, on the other hand, has continued to use his "Blame Treaty" plate for several editions, each time burnishing (eliminating) lines from the plate and adding new elements. If the artist wishes, and if the image is sufficiently different from the earlier state, the new state is treated as a separate edition. However, if some impressions are simply printed in a different color or type of paper from those of the rest of the edition, Crown Point Press does not designate these as a separate state, but rather as a variant within the edition.

For each edition, Crown Point Press prepares a detailed documentation sheet containing all the relevant technical information about a particular edition, including the distribution of the proofs. It is important to note that the terminology we use may differ from that used by other workshops. The documentation provides the only accurate account of types, number and distribution of proofs. The documentation will also list the medium, the names of the printers who worked with the artist, the dates of the artist's residence, the edition size, paper type and size, image size, inks used, number of plates used, etc., with occasional comments as well. Each purchaser receives a documentation sheet which should be kept with the print as a guarantee of authenticity.

Constance Lewallen
Associate Director

Overview

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