

Crown Point Press Release

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GESTURAL LANGUAGE

Pia Fries, Jacqueline Humphries, Janis Provisor, Laurie Reid,
Amy Sillman, Pat Steir, Patricia Treib, Mary Weatherford and Charline von Heyl
April 4 - May 31, 2024

Crown Point Press presents *Gestural Language*, an exhibition that brings together a group of artists who have pursued 20th century abstract painting using a variety of individualized visual languages. Characterized by gestural brush strokes or painterly mark making, the works of these artists make a case for the continued relevance of an almost one-hundred-year-old genre as a vital tradition of creation. On view at Crown Point Press April 4 - May 31, the exhibition includes prints by Pia Fries, Jacqueline Humphries, Janis Provisor, Laurie Reid, Amy Sillman, Pat Steir, Patricia Treib, Mary Weatherford, and Charline von Heyl.

Pat Steir made her first prints at Crown Point Press in 1977. A leading abstract painter of her generation, Steir is known for her iconic waterfall-like paintings. Her horizontal print, *4 Rivers*, is emblematic of this style. Four swath-like brushstrokes of yellow, black, pink and blue cascade against a dark background that is divided into three panels. In drypoint, Steir drew hatch-like marks to create a grid in the center panel. The artist has said that she makes her work with the attitude of a gymnast, "first the meditation, then the leap." She lives and works in New York.

Charline von Heyl's etchings strongly reflect her approach to painting. She begins work without sketches or a plan, and generally relies on an intuitive abstract mark-making that has room for both humor and a defiant sternness. "When I was drawing, I really wasn't thinking about anything but a gesture, just about putting a mark on that plate," Charline von Heyl said to Kathan Brown during her 2014 etching project at Crown Point. The work titled *Nightpack (Red, Yellow, Blue)* is a large vertical print (as are most prints in this exhibition). From a blue rectangle a red anthropomorphic creature swirls out, girded by the constraints of the image area. Von Heyl was born in Bonn, Germany, and has lived in New York since 1994. That same year she had her first exhibition in the Petzel Gallery and her most recent exhibition at the gallery was in 2023.

Janis Provisor's *Hinterland*, 1992, is one of six prints the New York-based artist made during her second project at Crown Point Press. Provisor built up the surface area to create dense, multi-layered, landscape-inspired abstractions. Influenced by Chinese calligraphy and landscape painting as well as by Abstract Expressionism, Provisor has said that her art originates in the natural landscape found in everyday life. "To me nature implies a much larger, much grander experience, both positive and negative, forceful and passionate." She lives and works in Connecticut.

Pia Fries first studied sculpture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Lucerne and later she studied painting under Gerhard Richter at the Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf; she lives in Switzerland and Germany. Her first project at Crown Point Press, in 2007, marked the first time she had made etchings. In advance of her arriving at the studio, Fries sent film negatives to the studio and lead printer Emily York along with the other printers developed photogravure plates and printed them in black and white. In *Pliss*, the photogravure elements of the image are sculptural crepe-like ribbons that fold into themselves. Fries additionally drew fluid and cascading shapes using soap ground and spit bite. In her paintings as in her prints, Fries uses negative space as a formal element to balance heavier or dense marks.

Patricia Treib is an abstract artist who considers the experience of time and memory to create the space in her paintings, watercolors, and prints. Through a methodical process of reducing, repeating, and remaking, she transforms a wide range of found motifs into abstract shapes that oscillate within the pictorial framework. During her 2018 project at Crown Point, she used repeated forms balanced by wide, fluid brushstrokes in saturated and pale colors, creating both immediacy and deliberation. *Interval* is a medium-sized print, its foreground filled by a totem-like blue shape. A chubby pink column sits to the side, while a black feather-like angel graces its top. Treib was born in 1979 in Saginaw, Michigan, and she lives and works in Brooklyn.

Gestural Language is on view in the Crown Point Gallery at 20 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, April 4 - May 31. The gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 9AM – 5 PM.

