

# Crown Point Press

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## Animals Among Us: A Group Exhibition

November 15 – December 30, 2021



Animals throughout the ages and across cultures have been depicted in art in every imaginable form. Often they are the embodiment of our desires, needs and hopes, and as domesticated pets they have taken on a larger-than-usual role during the COVID pandemic. Their relationship to humans has proved essential. In art, animals are inspirational, symbolic, allegorical, and supernatural.

Crown Point Press presents *Animals Among Us*, a group exhibition that brings together 17 artists who have made prints with animals as subject. Birds are on display by Christopher Brown, Robert Kushner, Tom Marioni, Laura Owens, and Wayne Thiebaud. Jockum Nordstrom incorporates insects into a surreal landscape in the print titled *House and Bugs*. Nathan Oliveira's *Dogman* is a richly textured drypoint of a dog superimposed on the profile of a man. The imagery "emphasizes the strong identification the artist perceives between the species: the human qualities of canines, the animal nature of humans," wrote Joann Moser in the exhibition catalog, *Nathan Oliveira* (San Jose Museum of Art, 2002). A black, bumpy, comically menacing tropical frog stares at us in *Plain Rain Frog*, a photogravure by Susan Middleton. The velvety red and black *Double Lunar Dogs* by performance artist Joan Jonas are mirrored profiles of two regal canines.

*Animal Music for the Spheres* (1996) (shown above), a large, airy, colorful etching by William T. Wiley, captures a universal relationship between animals and the cosmos. The small dachshund on the lower left bottom of the print grounds us in the regular world while a crab, monkey, bear and lion twirl across and around the negative space. A planet-like sphere at the center dictates their movements. William T. Wiley (1937 – 2021) began making art when abstract expressionism ruled the art world; over the course of his career he rejected minimalism, conceptual art, and other trends. Instead, he made his way by developing a style all his own. His irreverent art can seem offhand, but Wiley was deeply committed to the overall meaning of each work. His first project at Crown Point was in 1978.

David True's large colorful woodcut, *Cut Flowers, Unexpected* (1989) is alive with vivid reds and oranges. Poppies are scattered across the image field and a whale rises from a white spray of water. The association of the poppies with the imagined vista implies a hallucination. John Yau wrote in an exhibition catalog from 1986 that the artist "Tries to discover the pleasures of belief. [And he] knows that only by entering the realm of the imagination can one find clues about the nature of reality." True's imagery points to abstract concepts while often encouraging a search for meaning and attention.

*Animals Among Us* is on view in the Crown Point Gallery at 20 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, November 15 – December 30. Crown Point Press is committed to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and keeping our staff and clients healthy. All visitors to the Crown Point building must wear masks at all times. Our hours are Monday - Friday, 9AM-5PM.