



# Crown Point Press

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## *TOM MARIONI at 80*

September 7 – October 31, 2017



Image: Tom Marioni, *Beer with Lemon*, 2017.

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA:** Crown Point Press announces *TOM MARIONI at 80*, an exhibition exploring Marioni's contribution to conceptual art through his use of social actions as art. On view September 7 to October 31, the exhibition centers on his signature social artwork, *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art* (1970). *TOM MARIONI at 80* presents new prints and earlier object-based works that refer to the evolution of that seminal 1970 work. The six new prints by Marioni were completed in the spring of 2017 at Crown Point and focus on the beer bottle itself, the object crucial to *Beer with Friends*. There will be a reception with the artist on Wednesday, September 13, from 6-8pm. Marioni's sound piece *Beer Drinking Sonata* (1996) will be performed by 13 invited friends at 6:30pm that evening.

In 1970 Tom Marioni, under the name of his alter ego Allan Fish, first installed *Beer with Friends* at the Oakland Museum of California. He invited 16 friends to the museum to drink beer in a closed exhibition space. Since then Marioni has exhibited the work at over forty art spaces worldwide, ranging as far as Sydney, Australia and Vienna, Austria. The work is still on-going and is known as *Society of Independent Artists* today.

In earlier versions of *Beer with Friends*, Marioni has used a bottle to symbolize the male and the color yellow to symbolize enlightenment. In *Beer with Lemon*, he says, the lemon stands for the spirit of California light. The bouquet in *Beer Bottle Bouquet* supplies a female element but, at the same time, the titles of two small bouquet prints (*Particle Accelerator* and *Collision Debris*) refer to fast moving atomic experiments. This new group of etchings by Marioni explores his core elements in print form for the first time. Related sculpture, drawings, and unique works are presented alongside the new prints.

Tom Marioni pioneered conceptual art on the West Coast and is an influential member of the movement worldwide. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1937, Marioni was a Catholic school altar boy, attended a music conservatory, and studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy from 1955-59. He moved in 1959 to San Francisco where he still lives and works. Influenced by Joseph Beuys, John Cage, and Marcel Duchamp, Marioni was one of the first artists to identify performance as sculptural action and social situations as art, otherwise known as relational aesthetics or social art.

Action, body, and sound have remained the foundations of his art. In 1969 he made his first sound and performance sculpture by throwing an unbound tape measure into the air to create *One Second Sculpture*. In 1970 he founded the Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA), which was the artist's largest, most ambitious social artwork and most likely the first alternative art space in the country. Marioni has amassed a body of work comprised of actions, drawings, prints, and writings over five decades. His work has been exhibited internationally and is part of the permanent collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany; and the Pompidou Center in Paris; among others. The archive of MOCA is held by the Berkeley Art Museum. Marioni is represented by Anglim Gilbert Gallery in San Francisco and Margarete Roeder Gallery in New York.

*TOM MARIONI at 80* is on display in the Crown Point Gallery at 20 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, from September 7 – October 31, 2017. On view concurrently with the exhibition is *Wayne Thiebaud – Merriment*, which features new etchings by Thiebaud. The gallery hours are Monday 10-5 and Tuesday through Saturday 10-6.