

Crown Point Press

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Signs of a Series: A Group Exhibition

March 4 – May 28, 2021

“I think of working in series as hiccups being on top of echoes.” – Ed Ruscha

Crown Point Press announces the release of a new etching, *Sign in a Rainstorm*, by Ed Ruscha. It is the third print in a series of sign images that Ruscha has been working on. The first in the series is *Lonely Highway*, published in 2019, and the second, *Sign in a Sandstorm*, is from earlier this year. These signs can be seen as hopeful. We are facing challenging times, but another sign ahead encourages us to keep going as we make our way down the road. All three images are featured in our current group exhibition, *Signs of a Series*.

Ruscha’s sign etchings introduce a group exhibition, *Signs of a Series*, featuring ten artists (in addition to Ruscha) who have made prints in a serial format at Crown Point. The artists are Tomma Abts, Darren Almond, Tony Cragg, Jacqueline Humphries, Alyson Shotz, Pat Steir, Wayne Thiebaud, Patricia Treib, Richard Tuttle, and Charline von Heyl. A body of work can evolve in many ways while maintaining an underlying connectedness. This exhibition explores how a series can provide a way for artists to examine a theme or technique in greater depth.

Gas stations, billboards, sunsets, and signs are common motifs in Ruscha’s work, which is often characterized by a twist of deadpan humor. The motifs are drawn from the artist’s road trips across America, traveling from his hometown in Oklahoma to Los Angeles, where he currently lives. *Sign in a Sandstorm* (2021) depicts a sign that reads “STATE LINE” standing in an empty landscape. Beige flecks fill the space, like sand particles blowing in the desert. Ruscha often uses a speckled texture in his work. It renders a dust-like or gravel-like appearance, and creates a static interference within the images. For this print, Ruscha used direct gravure, a method of photogravure that begins with a handmade drawing instead of an image from a camera. He drew on a transparent film in his studio, then sent the drawing to Crown Point to be etched into a copper plate. The finished image is sharp and straightforward, similar to the first print in his series, *Lonely Highway* (2019).

Richard Tuttle has created a great deal of his art in serial format, using media that include sculpture, drawing, printmaking, and painting. He is constantly questioning and examining different ideas, and these are reflected in his diverse works. *Naked* (2004), featured in this exhibition, is his seventh project with Crown Point. It is a series of ten etchings with roman numeral designations, I through X. This suggests an order in which they should be seen, but each print can be understood individually. Tuttle has woven similar shapes, colors, and patterns into the series, sometimes with unusual tools. In *Naked I*, *Naked II*, *Naked V*, and *Naked IX*, for example, he used a plastic nubbed hairbrush to make round clusters. This was just one of the experimental approaches that Tuttle used during his time at Crown Point.

Charline von Heyl takes a loose, spontaneous approach to mark-making, creating visually active work. In 2014, she completed ten prints in the Crown Point studio. She repeated forms throughout the series, changing certain colors and adding or subtracting shapes. The linear form in *Snoopy (Black V)* appears in five other prints, disguised behind wild brushstrokes. The gestural bright orange tones in *Dust on a White Shirt (Stripes)* are similar to the grey tones in *Dust on a White Shirt (Evil Eye)*, but produce entirely different effects. “In printing, you have pieces of a puzzle and once you get going you just keep putting them together,” von Heyl explained. “They all seem like the same image, but they are so different!”

Signs of a Series is on view in the Crown Point Gallery at 20 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, from March 4th to May 28th. Crown Point Press is committed to limiting the spread of COVID-19 and keeping staff and clients healthy. We are welcoming visitors to the gallery and bookstore by appointment. Please phone us at (415) 974-6273 or send an email to Valerie Wade to set up a time. Our hours are Monday-Friday, 9AM-5PM.

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