

Overview



Pendulum, 2018. Color sugar lift, soap ground and spit bite aquatints. The images shown here measure 15-x-11¼-inches on a 20¾-x-16½-inch sheet, each in an edition of 25. All images printed by Courtney Sennish. Visit crownpoint.com for prices and information.

PATRICIA TREIB

Printmaking Both Fast and Slow

In January of 2018, Brooklyn-based painter Patricia Treib was interviewed by Crown Point director Valerie Wade during her second week of working in the Crown Point studio.

VW: You've been here at the Press two weeks, now, and have completed five color aquatints. I understand that this process was new to you. Did you find it offered you good options for developing your work?

PT: Oh, yes! Almost too many options!

VW: When you're getting started with an image, how do you begin?

PT: It's important that I work with something I'm observing. The starting points I use are mostly things I find ambiguous, with some kind of mystery to them. They are points to meditate on—an area I find unusual, something I'd like to take further. I will then focus on the less-nameable and more ephemeral aspects



Drape, 2018. Color sugar lift, soap ground and spit bite aquatints on gampi paper chine collé.



Straps, 2018. Color sugar lift, soap ground and spit bite aquatints.

of what I am looking at and attempt to give those areas more weight and presence through the way they are painted. I'm not focusing on a nameable thing, but on the area around it, on something less known.

VW: Etching is a slow process. Did that matter to you?

PT: I work by practicing and rehearsing and building up to the point of marking the paper or canvas. However, I want the paintings to feel as if they came together all at once; that they just appeared.

In printmaking, I found it challenging to bring in a sense of speed and the feeling of simultaneity that I aim for in painting. But, I am also interested in an image where the time of making is more complicated and deliberate. One that is both fast and slow, though it may appear spontaneous.

VW: I read in a review that your work is about icons and art history. Is that true?

PT: I have worked with a detail of a Russian icon, of a hand emerging from a drape, and details of historical paintings, but having a personal connection to the source I begin with is the most important part. It's not about reinterpreting an icon; I want it to

be about the time and experience of looking itself. The source is in there, but in a tangential way. The question of subject matter is elusive. I need it to start with, but it slips away—although a remnant of it may remain.

VW: What about color?

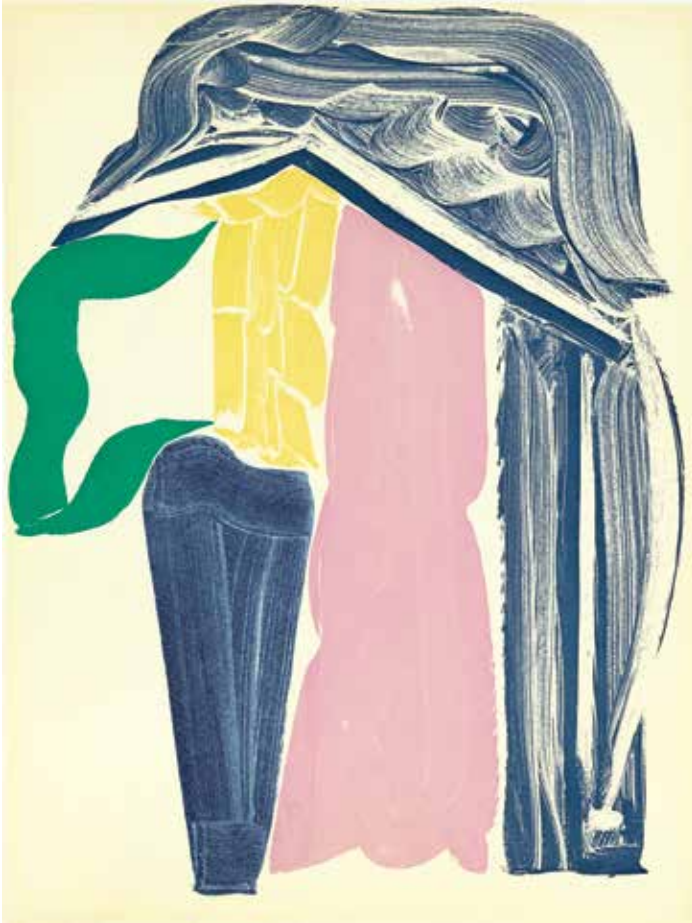
PT: Color is one of the most important elements. I bring it in from a separate direction, and it is at times shocking, and other times more subtle. But in every case I want it to be something that can shift the space, or contribute to shifting it. Hopefully it adds a sense of animation; it isn't sitting still.

VW: Your palette isn't just primary colors: red, yellow, blue. Is it an emotional reaction?

PT: Yes, I want it to evoke a feeling.

VW: What did you find different about the medium of etching—as opposed to doing a drawing or a watercolor?

PT: Transparency and light are important to me—how the color sits on the surface. Here, I couldn't get to the surface, to see how the color will exist, until the very end. So, I had to do a lot of



Cuff, 2018. Color sugar lift and soap ground aquatints with aquatint.



Interval, 2018. Color sugar lift, soap ground and spit bite aquatints.

experimentation. I later realized that I didn't want to approximate painting. I wanted to think about the etched plate for itself, to think about its range.

VW: Can you describe how you came to that conclusion?

PT: I was working with aquatint, with large areas of tone, which is close to how I work with painting. But in painting, I thin down the paint significantly, and here, the thinness has to do with the bite in the plate and that causes the thickness of the ink.

VW: So, did you approach the plate differently than you would approach a painting?

PT: Yes, although I found an important connection between the type of figure and ground reversals that I strive for in painting and the etching process itself. I was working mostly with sugar lift aquatint. The mask, or the painted area on the plate, is later washed away; what remains on the plate is the absence of a painted mark that you can then build up in different ways. I found that this process of only being able to record the absence of a brush mark corresponded with the types of negative spaces and spaces in-between that I look for as subjects in my paintings.



Patricia Treib in the Crown Point studio, 2018.

Crown Point Press

20 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
415.974.6273
crownpoint.com

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IN THE CROWN POINT GALLERY

PATRICIA TREIB
May 3 - June 30, 2018



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