

Overview



Nathan Oliveira with model in the Crown Point studio, 2007.

NATHAN OLIVEIRA: *Rocker II*

It has been two years since Nathan Oliveira, working in the Crown Point Press studio on a copper plate from a live model, created his sublime *Angel Rocker*. This year we have “*Rocker II*,” the artist’s title for an exhibition focused on three large figure aquatints, direct descendants of *Angel Rocker*.

Ten years ago, in 1997, Oliveira began incorporating etching into his lifelong investigation of figures, and since then he has made many beautiful aquatints from live models at Crown Point. In each one of those we, his audience, can see something of our individual subjective selves. To Oliveira, however, those prints were baby steps, and *Angel Rocker* (2005), was a giant step. It is very large, a red/brown figure against an orange back-



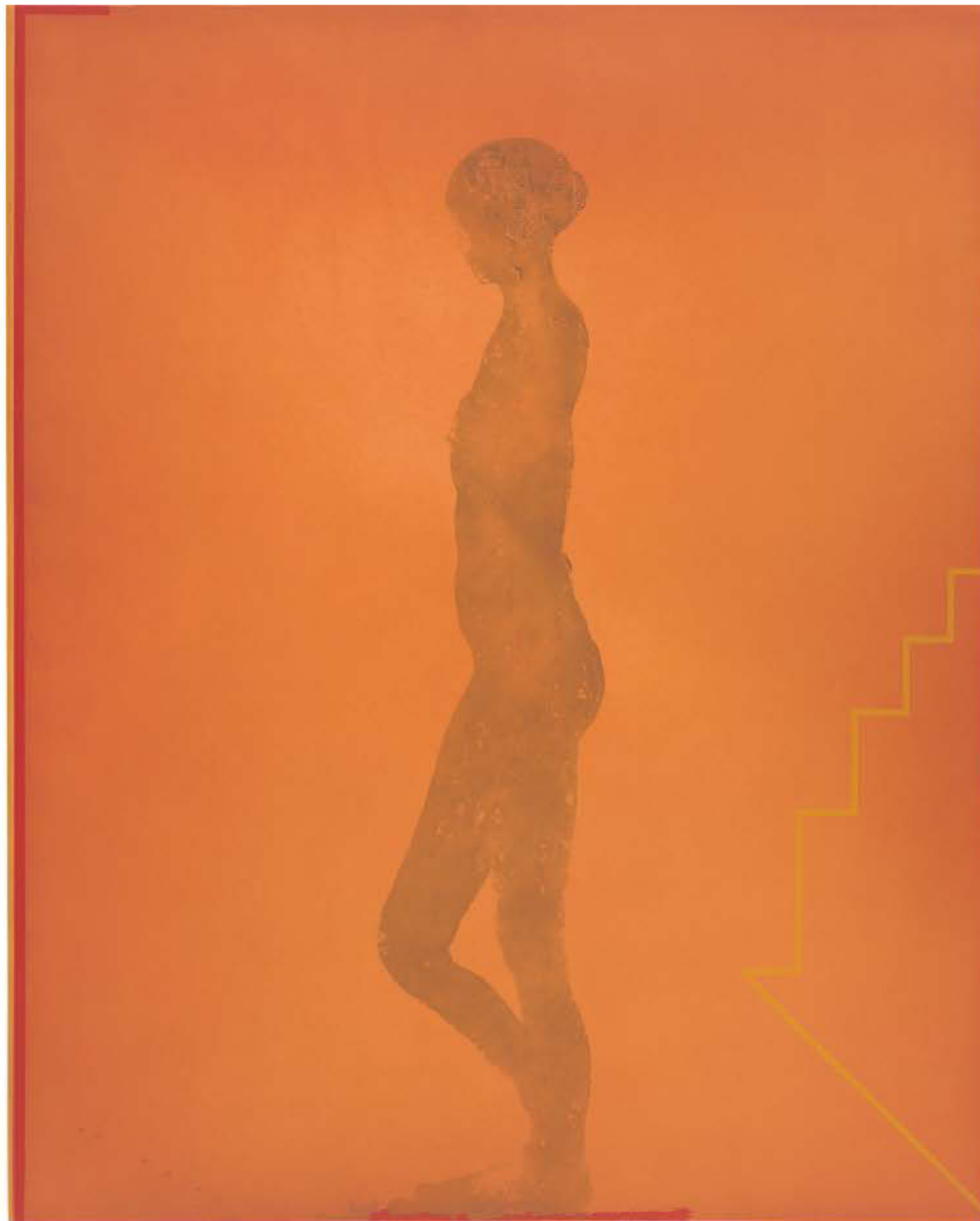
Angel Rocker, 2005. Color sugar lift aquatint with aquatint and drypoint. Paper size: 52 x 41”; image size: 45 x 36”, edition 40. Printed by Emily York.



Rocker, 2007. Color sugar lift aquatint with hard ground etching. Paper size: 52 x 41"; image size: 45 x 36". Edition 35. Printed by Ianne Kjørlic.

ground. The figure stands on a rocker but she is not out of balance. Her body is compact, alert, straight, and strong. The "Rocker II" series evokes *Angel Rocker's* presence and extends her emotional complexity. Only the first print in the series includes a rocker. In the second, the figure balances on one leg, and the third figure

is a bird! The rocker this time is moving. The human being twists to keep her balance, one hand against the invisible picture plane. Her head whirls. Her feet dissolve in the light that plays across her body. Unlike the angel quietly watching, she is one of us, adjusting and changing, keeping her balance against the odds. In



Standing Figure, 2007. Color sugar lift and spit bite aquatints with hard ground etching. Paper size: 52 x 41"; image size: 45 x 36". Edition 35. Printed by Ianne Kjørle.

the second image the person has become serene. Removed from the external turbulence of the rocker, she stands straight, her arms so inactive as to be invisible. She is balanced on one leg, the other folded back, and she stretches upward, elongating herself. Inside your own body have you not felt, at different times, the way these

two different figures look? I have.

And, finally, there is a bird. The bird at first surprised me, since its model was a female person there in the studio. But with a second look, I am not surprised. I can see this bird, like the other figures, from the inside out. The bird's wings are folded for a split second—wing beats



Bird, 2007. Color drypoint with sugar lift and spit bite aquatints and hard ground etching. Paper size: 52 x 41"; image size: 45 x 36". Edition 35. Printed by Inne Kjørle.

surround it. Supported in its vertical position by air that is palpable, the bird rests. It collapses its neck, focuses its eyes. It is buoyant, waiting, watching, slack wings against a strong body, alert—as birds are, as nature is, as we sometimes brace ourselves to be, if only for a split second in time.



Nathan Oliveira and Inne Kjørle in the Crown Point studio, 2007.



Figure I, 2007. Color sugar lift aquatint. Paper size: 26 x 21"; image size: 18 x 14". Edition 15. Printed by Ianne Kjørlic.



Figure II, 2007. Color sugar lift aquatint with drypoint printed on gampi paper *chine collé*. Paper size: 26 x 21"; image size: 18 x 14". Edition 15. Printed by Ianne Kjørlic.

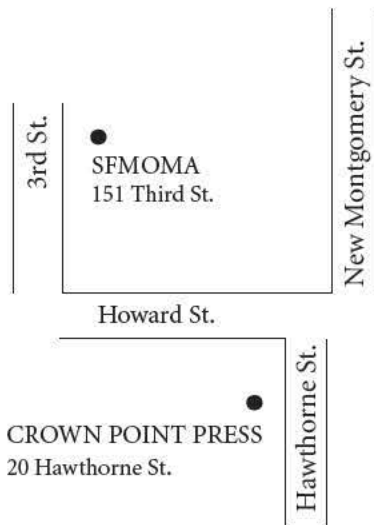
Two lovely baby-step prints join the grand Rocker II triumverate. They are comparatively small, and the dynamic reds and oranges of the Rockers are replaced by a quiet umber. The woman in *Figure I* stands in a dim room, brightened by a vertical zing of bright yellow, as if from a curtain pulled open just a crack. Threads of light glance against the opposite wall. The woman is light on her feet, stretching upward, perhaps in anticipation of the day.

In *Figure II*, the second umber print, light floods the room, blinding out the figure's head and one shoulder and glancing everywhere off the paper's surface. A long outstretched arm provides a horizontal zing. It is an arm seen only in outline as light approaches it from both above and below, diminishing its physicality. The woman's torso, strongly physical, is essentially in shadow. The figure twists toward us, sinking down into her hips and thighs, grounding herself.

Nathan Oliveira was born in 1928 in Oakland, California, and lives in Stanford, California. He was

a professor at the university there from 1964 until he retired in 1995. Peter Selz, writing in a catalog essay for Oliveira's 2002 retrospective at the San Jose Museum of Art, speaks of "the evocation of mystery that a viewer experiences in Oliveira's work" and of "a depth of feeling refracted through artistic tradition and transmitted to the spectator by the artist's hand." The artist's hand is everywhere apparent in these beautiful works made rich and mysterious by an especially sensuous use of the etching medium. Oliveira has been a painter and printmaker for nearly six decades, and is an inspirational presence in the art world of the San Francisco Bay Area. It is a great pleasure for us at Crown Point Press to share these works of art with you.

—Kathan Brown



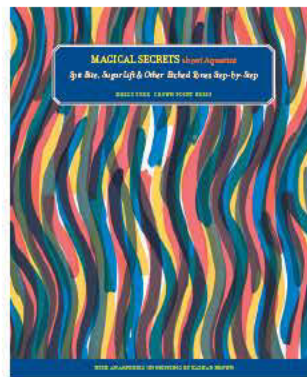
Crown Point Press is in the South of Market (SOMA) neighborhood of San Francisco, located around the corner from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The Crown Point gallery and bookstore are open to the public Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6. Please visit us in person or online.

www.crownpoint.com www.magical-secrets.com
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In the Crown Point Gallery

Nathan Oliveira: Rocker II

February 15 - April 5, 2008



Coming Soon

Magical Secrets about Aquatint: Spit Bite, Sugar Lift and Other Etched Tones Step-by-Step by Crown Point master printer Emily York. This 360 page book is the third in our Magical Secrets series, and will be available in early April. We will be previewing the new book during the 37th Annual Southern

Graphics Council Conference, March 26-29 at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Richmond, VA.

In **Magical Secrets about Aquatint** Emily York discusses a form of etching used to create delicate washes, velvety blacks, and intricate layers of color impossible in other art media. Using 46 aquatints by 32 artists, she ties process directly to art and explains the processes of spit bite, sugar lift, soap ground, and water bite. She also details steel-facing and multiple-plate printing, and gives step-by-step instructions for making your own aquatints. The book has two appendices: "Printing the Crown Point Press Way" by Kathan Brown and "Using Acid to Bite Plates" by Catherine Brooks. A DVD is included. \$60. *Order online or by telephone for shipment in April. Order before April 1st to receive a 10% pre-publication discount, or purchase the new book in conjunction with one or both of the earlier books in the series and receive 20% off the entire package.*

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