Crown Point Press, founded in the Bay Area in 1962 and now located in San Francisco, is widely acknowledged as one of America’s foremost contemporary print publishers. The Crown Point Press Archive was acquired in 1991 by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. The acquisition consisted of one impression of every print the press had produced since its beginnings and also a large number of working proofs, preparatory sketches, copper plates, and other technical materials. Crown Point Press continues to donate an impression from every edition produced, contributing to a collection that now numbers more than 4,000 works by 111 artists.

This valuable resource effectively documents the success of Kathan Brown’s efforts to revive etching as a medium of serious contemporary art. Brown, founding director of Crown Point Press, has been working with etching for almost fifty years. For her, etching is a kind of generic term that encompasses all the techniques of intaglio printing, including hard- and soft-ground etching, engraving, drypoint, aquatint, and mezzotint. She believes that these traditional techniques can be vehicles for new artistic approaches and has written extensively on etching as a flexible and modern printmaking medium for artists involved in all manner of art making.

This exhibition includes many of the prints from the archive that are featured in Brown’s most recent publication, Magical Secrets about Thinking Creatively: The Art of Etching and the Truth of Life (Crown Point Press/Prestel, 2006). Her thirteen creative principles (called “magical secrets”) are listed here along with illustrative prints by artists who have used them as strategies in making some of the most beautiful and memorable art of our time.

Karin Breuer
Curator of Contemporary Graphic Art

Nathan Oliveira, Dancer, 2004
1. Cultivate Sensuality
Discover details of the physicality of materials.

Wayne Thiebaud (American, b. 1920)
*Gum Machine*, 1964, from *Delights* (bound edition), 1985
Hard-ground etching
5 x 6 3/4 in. (image), 12 15/16 x 10 13/16 in. (page)
Printed by Kathan Brown
Gift of Kathan Brown
1991.22.395

Wayne Thiebaud
*Steep Street*, 1989
Color hard-ground etching, drypoint, aquatint, and split-bite aquatint with scraping and burnishing
30 x 22 in. (image), 38 3/4 x 30 1/2 in. (sheet)
Printed by Lawrence Hamlin
Gift of Crown Point Press
1991.23.6

2. Use a Lot of Time
Take enough time for what you are doing and be aware that you've embarked on a lifelong pursuit.

Chuck Close (American, b. 1940)
*Keith*, 1972
Mezzotint with roulette
45 x 35 5/4 in. (image), 51 x 41 1/2 in. (sheet)
Printed by Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press
Published by Parasol Press Ltd.
Museum purchase, bequest of Whitney Warren Jr.
in memory of Mrs. Adolph Spreckels
1991.28.96

Chuck Close
*Self-Portrait, Black on White*, 1977
Hard-ground etching
44 1/2 x 35 5/8 in. (image), 54 1/8 x 40 3/4 in. (sheet)
Printed by Patrick Foy at Crown Point Press
Published by Chuck Close/Pace Editions Inc.
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W.
and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation
1996.74.66

3. Get into the Flow
Encourage a mental state called “flow” that has a connection to creativity.

Richard Diebenkorn (American, 1922–1993)
*Green*, 1986
Color aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, soap-ground aquatint, and drypoint
45 x 35 1/4 in. (plate), 53 1/2 x 40 3/4 in. (sheet)
Printed by Marcia Bartheime
Gift of Crown Point Press
1991.23.1274

Unless otherwise noted, all works are in the
Crown Point Press Archive at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and all works were published by
Crown Point Press. Measurements are in inches, height preceding width.
Richard Diebenkorn
Red-Yellow-Blue, 1966
Color soft-ground etching and drypoint
15 3/4 x 30 in. (image), 26 1/4 x 40 in. (sheet)
Printed by Marcia Bartholome
Gift of Crown Point Press
1991.28.664

Richard Diebenkorn
#16, 1964, from 41 Etchings Drypoints, 1965
13 1/4 x 9 3/4 in. (image), 17 3/4 x 14 3/4 in. (sheet)
Printed by Kathleen Brown
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation
1996.74.76.16

Nathan Oliveira (American, b. 1928)
Dancer, 2004
Drypoint and color aquatint
16 x 13 in. (image), 25 x 21 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit, assisted by Catherine Brooks
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

4. Have an Idea
Think about what you are doing.

Tom Marioni (American, b. 1937)
Flying with Friends (Drypoint), 1999
Color drypoint
33 1/4 x 59 3/4 in. (image and sheet)
Printed by Dana Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

Tom Marioni
Drumming, 2002
Color soft-ground etching and aquatint
16 x 10 in. (image), 27 1/2 x 16 in. (sheet)
Printed by Rachel Fuller
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

Sol LeWitt (American, b. 1928)
Color and Black #3 (24 x 24), 1991
Color spit-bite aquatint
12 x 11 15/16 in. (image), 24 1/2 x 24 in. (sheet)
Printed by Lawrence Hamlin
Gift of Crown Point Press
1992.51.195

Sol LeWitt
Lines in Four Directions Superimposed in Each Quarter of the Square Progressively, 1971
Hard-ground etching
7 x 7 in. (image), 11 x 11 in. (sheet)
Printed by Kathleen Brown at Crown Point Press
Published by Parasol Press Ltd.
Gift of Crown Point Press
1991.28.765

Hans Haacke (German, b. 1936)
Tiffany Cares, 1978
Phototetching
16 x 34 1/2 in. (image), 29 1/2 x 41 1/2 in. (sheet)
Printed by Stephan Thomas
Gift of Kathleen Brown
1991.28.1206

5. Don’t Know What You Want
Cultivate an inquiring, open mind.

John Cage (American, 1912–1992)
Changes and Disappearances #35, 1979–1982
Color engraving, drypoint, and photocetching on Twinrocker Gray-green Laid paper
11 1/4 x 21 3/4 in. (image and sheet)
Printed by Lilah Toland
Gift of Kathleen Brown
1991.28.204

John Cage
Eninka 1, 1986
Burned, smoked, and branded Gampi paper mounted on Don Farnsworth handmade paper
24 7/8 x 18 7/8 in. (image and sheet)
Printed by Marcia Bartholome
Gift of Crown Point Press
1992.167.47

John Cage
75 Stones, 1989
Color spit-bite aquatint and sugar-lift aquatint on smoked paper
47 13/16 x 35 1/4 in. (image), 54 1/8 x 41 1/4 in. (sheet)
Printed by Pamela Paulson
Gift of Crown Point Press
1991.28.1336

Shahzia Sikander, No. 2, Entangled, 2001

Chuck Close, Keith, 1972
8. Use Every Tool

Use new tools as needed without throwing out the old ones.

Shahzia Sikander (Pakistani, b. 1969)

Four prints from the portfolio No Parking Anytime, 2001

No. 1, Armorial Bearings
Color photogravure and soft-ground etching

No. 2, Entangled
Color photogravure, soap-ground aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, and soft-ground etching

No. 4, Metro
Color photogravure and soft-ground etching

No. 7, Bound
Color photogravure, soft-ground etching, spit-bite aquatint, and water bite aquatint

Each 10 x 7 1/2 in. (image), 18 1/4 x 14 1/2 in. (sheet)
Printed by Rachel Fuller
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

9. Use Every Source

Use sources of images and ideas as if they were tools.

Laura Owens (American, b. 1970)

Untitled (LO 270), 2004
Color spit-bite aquatint, soap-ground aquatint, aquatint, and soft-ground etching
24 x 20 in. (image), 35 x 28 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

Laura Owens

Untitled (LO 272), 2004
Color spit-bite aquatint and soft-ground etching
29 1/2 x 35 1/2 in. (image), 39 1/2 x 44 1/2 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

6. Know What You Don’t Want

Understand what others have done and how not to repeat it.

Robert Bechtle (American, b. 1932)

Texas and 20th Intersection, 2004
Color soft-ground etching and aquatint
21 7/8 x 3 3/4 in. (image), 31 x 39 in. (sheet)
Printed by Catherine Brooks
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

7. Stick Your Neck Out

Go against prevailing attitudes if you feel like it.

Pat Steir (American, b. 1940)

Long Vertical Falls #1 and Long Vertical Falls #3, from the series Long Vertical Falls, 1991

Spit-bite aquatint and soap-ground aquatint
44 7/8 x 22 13/16 in. (each image),
43 1/8 x 30 1/2 in. (each sheet)
Printed by Brian Shure
Gift of Crown Point Press
1992.167.1060
1992.167.1062

Richard Tuttle, Costume B, 2002
10. Become Skillful
Know when you need to develop skill yourself and when you can use the skill of others.

Fred Wilson (American, b. 1954)
 Bang, 2004
Split-bite aquatint and color aquatint
20 x 24 in. (image), 30 1/2 x 34 in. (sheet)
Printed by Case Hudson
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

Fred Wilson
Convocation, 2004
Split-bite aquatint, color aquatint, and direct gravure
20 x 24 in. (image), 30 1/2 x 34 in. (sheet)
Printed by Case Hudson
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

11. Take Yourself Lightly
Have a sense of humor and don’t see yourself at the center of the universe.

Peter Doig (British, b. 1959)
Guest House, 2002
Color sugar-lift aquatint, split-bite aquatint, aquatint, and drypoint
15 1/2 x 10 in. (image), 24 1/2 x 18 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

12. Go into the Ether
Let yourself slip into another world from time to time.

Richard Tuttle (American, b. 1941)
Three prints from the portfolio Costume, 2002

Costume B
Color aquatint and split-bite aquatint on
c. 1985 Farnsworth handmade paper
24 1/2 x 18 1/2 in. (image and sheet)

Costume C
Color aquatint on ca. 1920 Head
handmade antique gray paper
13 x 13 in. (image), 23 1/3 x 19 1/2 in. (sheet)

Costume D
Color aquatint and sugar-lift aquatint on
c. 1990 Lacroque Colombe handmade paper
23 3/4 x 21 in. (image), 25 x 22 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

13. Own It
Know that you are doing the work you should be doing.

Dorothy Napangardi (Australian Aborigine, b. 1956)
Sandhills, 2004
Color soap-ground aquatint, split-bite aquatint, and aquatint
17 3/4 x 23 3/4 in. (image), 25 1/2 x 30 3/4 in. (sheet)
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Gift of Crown Point Press
2006

Cover:
Richard Diebenkorn, Green, 1986