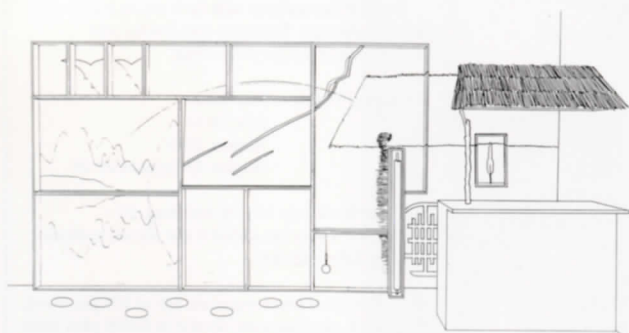


# Overview

## Tom Marioni

In 1973, at the University Art Museum in Berkeley, Tom Marioni demonstrated the importance of intention in art. He began by asking the museum janitor to sweep the floor. The janitor's intention was to get the floor clean. Next, a dancer swept the floor, using the same broom. She intended to show the movement of her body through space, so she put feathers on the floor and gracefully swept them about while children ran through the scene. Next an actor, playing the role of janitor, swept the floor. He did not sweep up anything, but gave the audience a convincing illusion of working at sweeping. Marioni described the final part of the demonstration in this way: "Then I swept the floor. I'm a sculptor. I put sand on the floor. My sweeping created a pattern by manipulating the sand to demonstrate that the same activity is a different activity depending upon the intent of the person performing it."

Although at the time Marioni was working mostly as a performance artist, he called the Berkeley museum event a demonstration, not a performance, because it illustrated a concept rather than exploring one. He believes conceptual art's concepts should be shaped by an artist's work and not be well defined ahead of time. Like most artists, Marioni is interested in manipulating materials, not in manipulating his audience, and he considers himself a sculptor because in all his work his underlying intent is to use "the principles of sculpture, that is, the relationship of forms in space and in time." He



Tom Marioni, drawing for installation *By the Sea*, 1992. Ink on paper.

sees no conflict in being both a sculptor and a conceptual artist. Conceptual artists accept virtually anything, tangible or intangible, as a possible art material, and they do not define themselves by the materials they use, as painters, photographers or printmakers do. They use for each work whatever material is most suitable to the concept being explored.

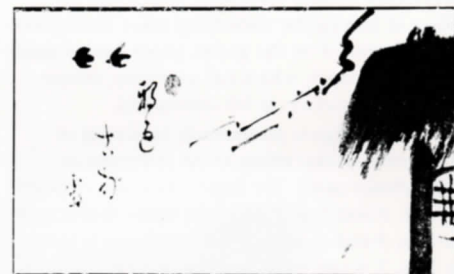
Marioni's explorations fall into two categories. The first, which he once defined with a Private Investigation sign in his studio window, includes performances, drawings, prints and works of sculpture, often made from found objects. The second, which he considers more ambitious and complex, he calls his social art. This is large-scale work which uses social situations as material and centers on the Museum of Conceptual Art, called MOCA, which Marioni founded in 1970 and closed in 1984. MOCA's exhibitions, and later those of other artist-run spaces following MOCA's example, were important to the development of many artists in the San Francisco Bay Area. "When I organize shows of artists, I don't think of it as my art," Marioni told Robin White in a 1978 issue of *View*, "But MOCA's social activities and the idea of this museum are my art."

MOCA's ongoing social activity takes place every Wednesday when artists gather to drink beer and talk with one another. Originally this was in a bar downstairs from MOCA. It's been called, at various times, Cafe Society, Academy of MOCA and Cafe Wednesdays. In 1979 Crown Point Press published an edition of 100 bottles of *Cafe Society Beer*, specially produced and bottled by Anchor Steam Beer in San Francisco with a label engraved by Marioni and printed in our studio. Each bottle sold for \$100 and came with this instruction: "To complete the artwork, the beer must be consumed, shared by at least two people." The precedent to this work was an exhibition Marioni had at the Oakland Museum in 1970 called *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art*.

Twenty-three years ago when Marioni founded MOCA there was no place else in San Francisco where conceptual art was being shown. Now, conceptual art has been fully integrated into the established art world and MOCA is closed, but Cafe Wednesdays continues once a week in Marioni's own studio. Apart from that, Marioni's work now concentrates on Private Investigation. In February, 1993, there are two exhibitions in San Francisco of Marioni's work. One, titled *Seascapes*, is at the Paule Anglim Gallery and includes drawings and sculpture. The other, titled *Landscapes*, is at the Crown Point Press Gallery. Part of the Crown Point exhibition is a new group of prints, an engraving-mezzotint called *Tree at Night* and a series of watercolor monotypes called *Process Landscapes*.

The focus is a sculpture installation called *By the Sea (The Pacific Rim)* which places cafe activity against a large wooden backdrop containing drawing elements from Marioni's work over the past twenty years. *By the Sea* is based on an eighteenth century Japanese ink painting called *Hut and Crows*. The hut in the painting has become in Marioni's installation a thatched roof over a bar where social art can take place. It provides an active, human element in the work.

The crows are represented by two of Marioni's drum brush drawings, made by drumming with wire drum brushes on sandpaper. The drawings are done with both hands moving repeatedly in an overlapping pattern, a natural movement for a jazz drummer, and they



Reigen (1721-1785), *Hut and Crows*, ink on paper, 13 x 21 7/8".

look something like birds flying. In *View* Robin White spoke of the sound generated in making the drum brush drawings as "connected to the rhythms of your body, of your heartbeat and your breathing, which, amplified, can become available to people who are listening, and perhaps they align their rhythms with yours and there's a kind of communication there." Marioni replied that "drumming is a primitive form of communicating." Drum brush drawing occupied Marioni for several years in the 1970s both as performance art and, because of its repetitive gesture, as a meditative way of drawing. It was one result of a lengthy exploration of sound as a material, as well as being an aspect of Marioni's pursuit of drawing generated directly from the body.

Marioni's earliest drawings which explore gestures of body measurement are represented in *By the Sea* as branches of a tree. The drawings were made vertically, but have been turned in the installation to fit the pattern of the branches in *Hut and Crows*. *Drawing a Line as Far as I Can Reach*, 1972, was the first drawing of this sort, and Marioni still continues the series. In fact, the 1992 print, *Tree at Night*, contains one of the "As Far as I Can Reach" drawings. Marioni characterizes them as "vertical lines,

(continued on page 4)

## New Editions

This winter Crown Point Press is releasing several new etchings by Shoichi Ida and Al Held, two artists who have worked frequently at the press.

Ida has produced four bodies of work in etching at Crown Point to date, all of which are characterized by the uniting of organic and geometric form in lyrical, abstract compositions. Most of the etchings combine several techniques, including soft ground, aquatint, spit bite aquatint and drypoint. Ida titled his 12 new etchings *Falling Landscape—Between Air and Water*. In all of them transparent, fluid washes traverse atmospheric and delicate fields of color.

As in almost all of his prints, Ida here makes masterful use of chine collé, a process by which pieces of translucent Japanese gampi paper are adhered to the backing paper during printing. Often the gampi paper covers a previously printed color area, which has the effect of muting the underlying color. Sometimes color is printed on the gampi paper, and at times the gampi paper, which has a creamy, almost pearlescent surface, is left untouched.

Circles figure prominently in several of these new works, either as the dominant or subordinate motif. The large concentric circles of Nos. 1, 2 and 3, as well as the freely drawn arcs of Nos. 3 and 4, and the triangular linear motifs in Nos. 7, 8 and 9-12 are made with drypoint. A technique of incising directly into the copper plate, drypoint produces a rich, velvety line of variable thickness.

Individual rectangular or square sections (as many as nine in No. 5), each with its own incised plate mark, comprise each print. Usually the largest section is more or less centered on the paper and is bordered laterally by one or more vertical rectangles and, in some cases, by a horizontal rectangle along the bottom.

In addition to using geometric, linear marks, Ida frequently pressed actual plants into soft ground, which left an exact impression of the leaf or stem. Plant motifs cover major

sections of Nos. 1, 2, 4 and 6, and they also occur in the borders of Nos. 7, 8 and others. Ida uses spit bite transparent ink washes to great effect in all of these works. The orange and relatively dark brown washes of No. 1 contrast with the light pink and grey colors of the similarly composed No. 2. Vertical poured striations are bright orange in No. 7 and cool blue in No. 5. Ida applied the spit bite in circular daubs in No. 3 and in the bordering bands of Nos. 5, 9-12 and 8 (the largest print in the series).

Ida was born in Kyoto, Japan, where he continues to live, but has spent extended periods working in London, Paris and the United States. One of Japan's foremost artists, he is equally at home in painting, sculpture and printmaking. His work has been shown in one-person and group exhibitions in major galleries and museums around the world.

Of Al Held's three new bold and colorful etchings, *Liv* is the largest and most complex, measuring 40 1/2 x 54 1/4 inches and containing 33 colors on nine plates. It is composed of flat aquatint color areas describing geometric volumes which are traversed by a network of parallel or concentric hard ground lines. This is the second time Held has combined color planes with fine line (*Almost There*, 1989, was the first). In this majestic work, large and small shapes are dispersed over the entire surface in a spatial conundrum. Held presents multiple viewpoints. The blue cube and the smaller red one next to it are tipped in an upward direction while the purple cylinder at the top left of the composition points down. He also plays bright against darker colors, and all the while maintains a precarious equilibrium. Everything is in a kind of measured motion which comes to rest in a pink rectangle in the center. Along with the yellow cylinder it contains, the pink area is the only one not crossed by line. The shapes along the top and sides of the print are cropped, so that one has the impression that the artist is showing us a detail of a field of activity.

Held made two smaller color etchings entirely with the spit bite technique, which approximates the look of watercolor painting. Like the artist's watercolors, these two new prints are more lyrical and intimate than his large, ebullient acrylic paintings. In *Fly Away*, the three major geometric volumes—triangle, cylinder and rectangle—are superimposed, one over the other, in the center of the image area. They project forward, appearing to enter the space in front of the picture plane, while much smaller geometric forms shoot out of the foreground cylinder. The planes of each form are differentiated by abrupt or subtle color shifts: the cylinder has a vermilion exterior and green interior; the background rectangle is yellow inside and orange outside. The background is colored with transparent washes of ochre. The overall color scheme and feel of the print is bright and light.

*The Space Between the Two* is dominated by two large geometric shapes, a blue cube and a purple and red cylinder behind it, that push out diagonally at the borders of the image. A small orange triangle and green rectangle trail off to the right against a bright yellow background. The rich and resonant colors—18 in all—along with the monumentality of the shapes and simplicity of the arrangement, lend a solemnity to the whole. In this work, Held creates a window, actually a green and purple frame within a frame (as seen in Renaissance predellas), to hold the forms. In fact, the deep, perspective space and humanistic proportions of Italian Renaissance painting (Held works part of each year in Italy) are evident in all three of these works.

Constance Lewallen  
Associate Director

### Crown Point Press Summer Etching Workshops 1993

Crown Point Press is again offering four intensive workshops for intaglio printing in its two spacious studios in San Francisco. The workshops are designed for people who want to learn skills and produce editions of their own. Beginners are welcome. The instructors will be Crown Point master printers.

Students will be able to concentrate on the particular techniques they wish to learn, including photogravure, and should be able to produce at least one finished edition. We require that those interested in photogravure must sign up for a two-week period: July 5-17 or August 16-28. Each week-long session will be limited to an enrollment of 15 participants (inclusive of a maximum of four participants for the two-week photogravure section).

Each of the sessions will be 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Thursday with Friday and Saturday reserved for editioning.

Workshop Dates: July 5-10  
July 12-17  
August 16-21  
August 23-September 28

(The weeks of July 19 - 24 and Aug. 30 - September 4 may be added if the above sessions become fully enrolled.)

Fees: \$700 plus basic materials fee of \$50 per week. Two-week photogravure section is \$1400 plus basic materials fee of \$100.

A deposit of \$100 per session is required to reserve your space in the workshop. If the session is fully enrolled, your deposit will be returned in full. For cancellation refund, Crown Point Press must be notified no later than June 15, 1993 to receive full refund of your deposit.

Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis. Please call Joyce at (415) 974-6273 to request a brochure and application.

### Calendar of Exhibitions and Events

January 27 - March 6, 1993

**San Francisco: Tom Marioni**

**New York: Landscapes—John Cage and Tom Marioni**

March 11 - April 17, 1993

**San Francisco and New York: New Etchings by Al Held**

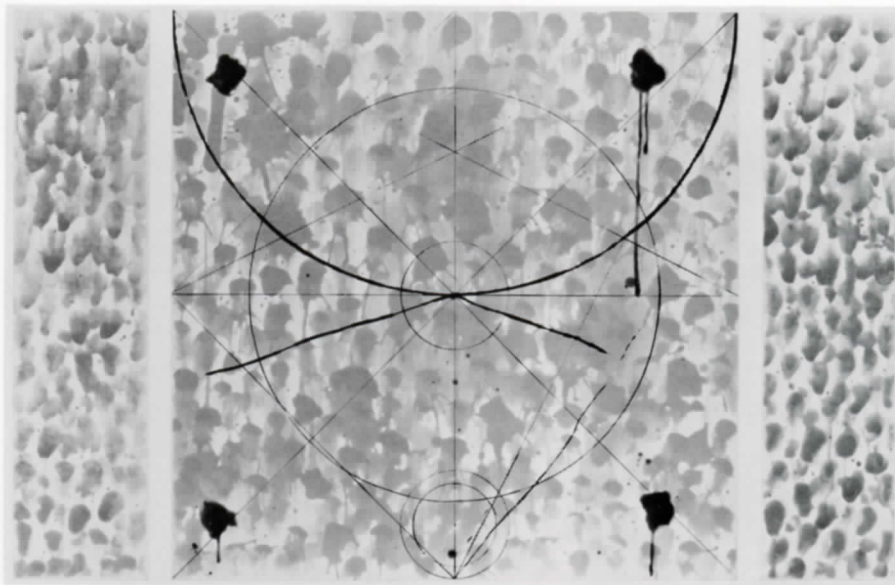
April 22 - June 5, 1993

**San Francisco and New York: Bay Area Tradition: Robert Bechtle, Christopher Brown, Wayne Thiebaud**

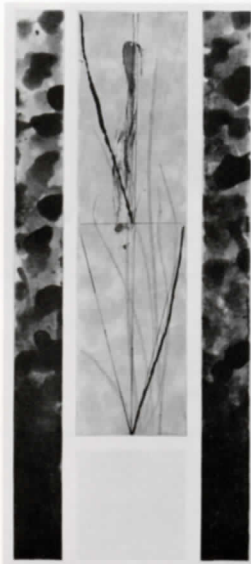
Baltimore Contemporary Art Fair

April 24, Champagne Preview, 5 - 8 pm

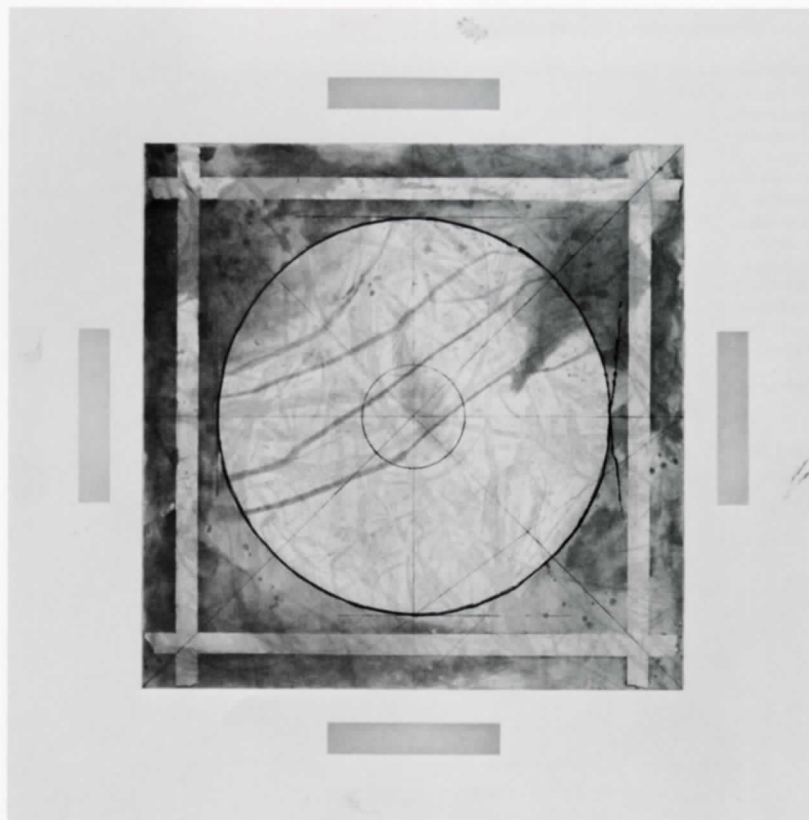
April 25, 11 am - 5 pm



Shoichi Ida, *Between Air and Water No. 3*, 1992, hard ground and spit bite aquatints, drypoint and chine collé, paper size: 39 x 51"; image size: 25 x 39", edition 40.



Shoichi Ida, *Between Air and Water No. 11*, 1992, from a series of 4 soft ground and spit bite aquatints, drypoint and chine collé, paper size: 27 x 17"; image size: 16 x 7", edition 5.



Shoichi Ida, *Between Air and Water No. 1*, 1992, soft ground, hard ground and spit bite aquatints, drypoint and chine collé, paper size: 46 x 45"; image size: 36 1/2 x 36 1/2", edition 40.

(Marioni continued from front page)

drawn over and over, creating an image that looks something like a tree."

A third element of drawing in *By the Sea* is the shadow of a man, standing under a tree, next to a rolled scroll which becomes the trunk of the tree and may refer to learning, or knowledge. "At the end of the 70s I began making drawings of my shadow with a very long pencil," Marioni says. "They ended up looking like actual shadows of a man in profile. In the 80s I have been doing calligraphic drawings with the soft end of a feather and ink. All of this work is body measurement, but each drawing has associations: tree, bird, man or—in the calligraphic works—picture writing."

Marioni became interested in Chinese calligraphy when he learned that writing Chinese characters is connected to the body's breath and other rhythms. He is interested also in the characters as pictures of concepts. He has written Chinese words he likes: heart, man, woman, art, tree, bird, for example. And he has used the calligraphic approach to write symbols, like Pi or Yen, as well.

*By the Sea* contains a framed feather. Though Marioni uses the feather itself as a brush, its quill is to him a symbol for writing. The

installation does not contain any of Marioni's calligraphic images. There is calligraphic writing in Hut and Crows, but to represent it Marioni has painted with sepia ink a picture of a landscape.

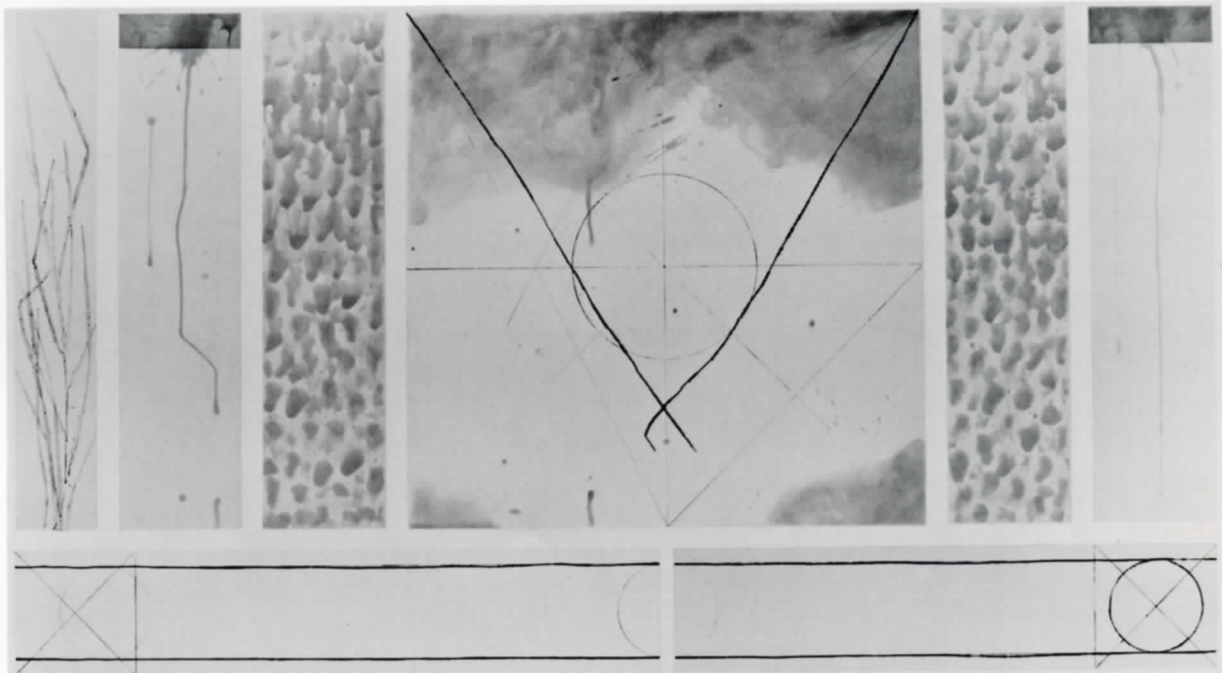
This landscape, in which hills rise steeply from the sea into mist, seems like a dream, but such hills exist in the town of Guilin, China. Marioni has repeated the hills and the water-land image in a series of monotypes which, in this exhibition, accompany his *By the Sea* installation. The process of printing defined and produced the monotypes. For each one, Marioni puddled ink along the lower edge of a plate, covered it with a sheet of paper and ran it through the press. As the paper and plate travelled between the rollers, the ink was pushed along to spread into images of mist, water and hills.

The soft beauty of the monotypes and of the landscape in *By the Sea* call to my mind a day in June, 1974, when Tom and I began a relationship which led to our marriage a few years later. I had invited him to make a print at Crown Point Press and he suggested a performance print. Art collectors David and Mary Robinson had asked him to create a work at their Sausalito home. We set up a large copper plate in the sun by their swimming pool. The pool sits in a garden which, seen from the

hillside house, seems cantilvered over the bay. The Robinsons' guests enjoyed drinks and food in the house, swam in the pool and wandered in the garden as Tom worked on the plate. He began by moving a spinning electric grinder elliptically around the reflection of the sun in the copper. He explained in a book we made later that to him the marks "resemble the path the earth takes as it spins and moves around the sun." After the initial single sweep with the grinder he spent a long time sanding and polishing the center of the ellipse. The gentle sounds of the polishing filled the garden because of a contact microphone attached to the underside of the plate. It was an idyllic afternoon. Later we took the plate to the press in Oakland and I printed it, first in black ink, then, on what seemed a whim of Tom's, in blue. Later, when the print was exhibited, someone remarked that blue is the color of the after-image of the sun, a connection Tom enthusiastically accepted though he hadn't thought of it before.

A nice thing about art is that it, like human relationships, keeps revealing itself over time.

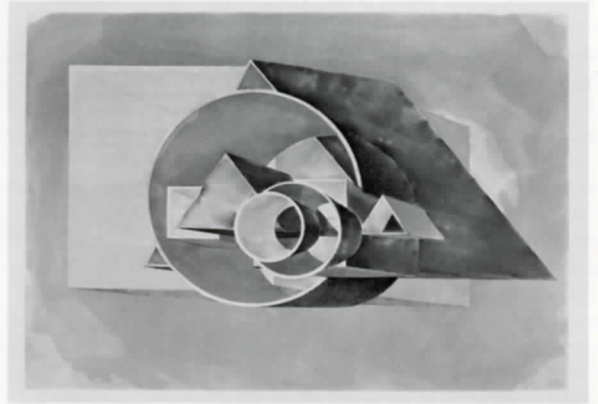
Kathan Brown



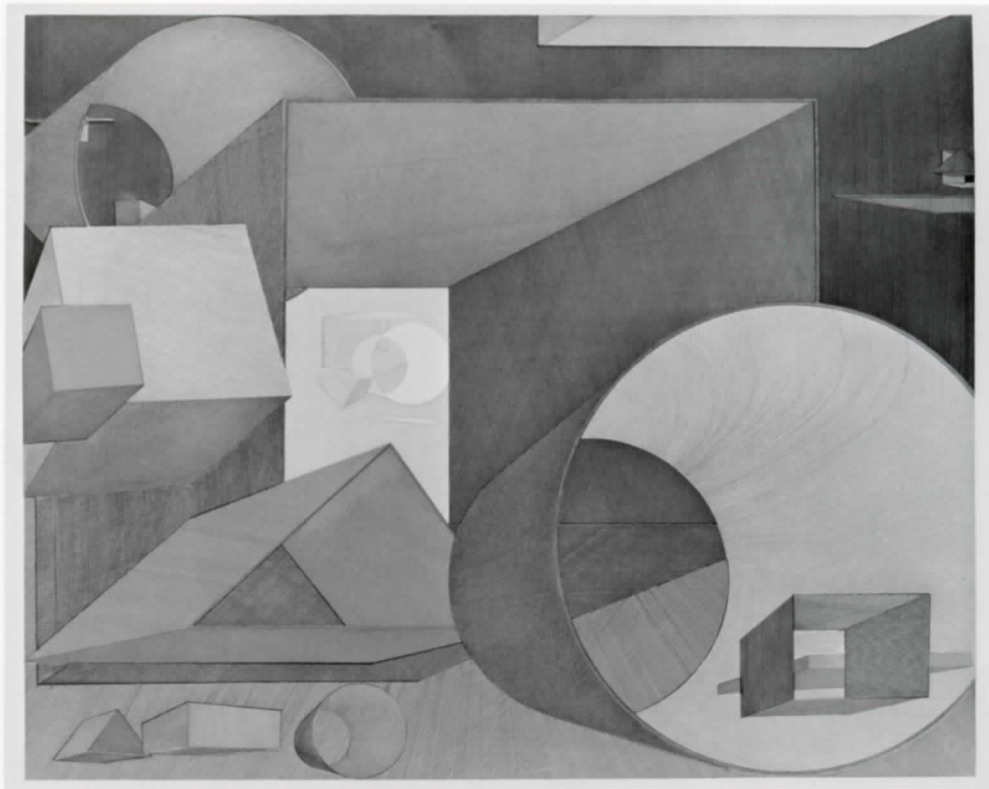
Shoichi Ida, *Between Air and Water* No. 8, 1992, soft ground and spit bite aquatints, drypoint and chine collé, paper size: 43 x 66 1/2", image size: 32 x 57 1/2", edition 10.



Al Held, *The Space Between the Two*, 1992, spit bite aquatint, paper size: 49 1/2 x 41"; image size: 32 1/2 x 28 3/4", edition 50.



Al Held, *Fly Away*, 1992, spit bite aquatint, paper size: 31 3/4 x 39 1/2"; image size: 20 3/4 x 30", edition 50.

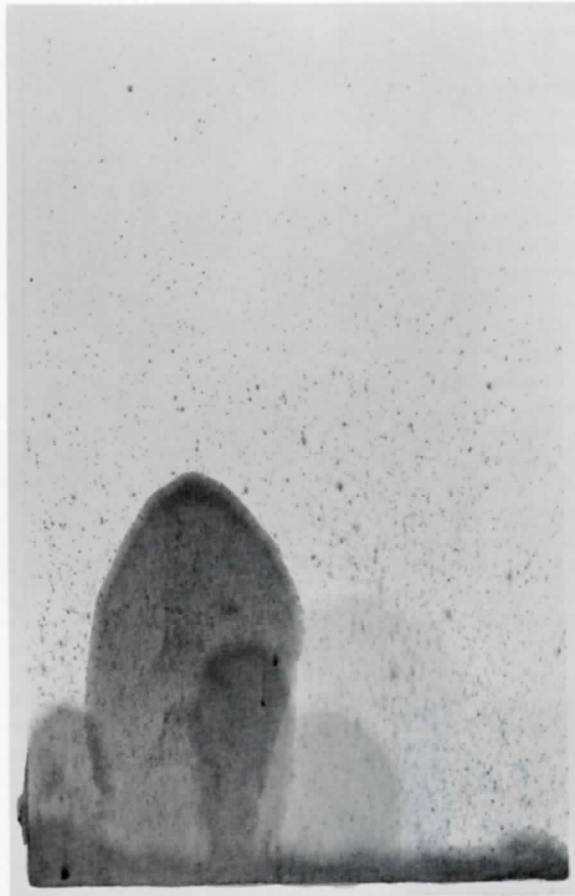


Al Held, *Lit*, 1992, aquatint and hard ground, paper size: 40 1/2 x 54 W"; image size: 35 1/2 x 44 3/4", edition 50.

## Notes

Crown Point press artists were very active during the past few months. In addition to those noted in the fall 1992 issue of *Overview*, **John Baldessari** showed drawings at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas; **Robert Bechtle** showed new paintings and works on paper at OK Harris, New York; **Christian Boltanski** had an exhibition at the Lisson Gallery in London and will have a large exhibition of his books (including "Gymnasium Chases," his portfolio of photogravures published by Crown Point Press) opening at the end of February at the New York Public Library (42nd Street and Fifth Avenue); **Christopher Brown** showed paintings at Zolla/Lieberman in Chicago; **Tony Cragg** had solo exhibitions at Lisson Gallery, London, and Tucci Russo, Torino, Italy; paintings from **Richard Diebenkorn's** Ocean Park series were shown at Gagosian Gallery in New York; **Eric Fischl** showed paintings and sculpture at Mary Boone, New York; **April Gornik** had a solo exhibition of paintings at Ed Thorp, New York; **Anish Kapoor** exhibited work at the Mito Art Center, near Tokyo; **Tom Marioni** was included in a three-person exhibition at Margarete Roeder in New York and, in addition to his installation and exhibition of new prints at Crown Point Press, San Francisco and New York, will open an exhibition at Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco, February 4. **Pat Steir** had a solo show at Robert Miller Gallery in New York and, through March 13, 1993, will be showing at the Galerie Franck and Schulte in Berlin. Currently, **Susana Solano's** sculpture can be seen in at the Palacio de Velázquez in Madrid, and **Robert Kushner's** exhibition, titled "Seasons," will be on view at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey through March 7, 1993. **Judy Pfaff** created a new site-specific installation (January 27 - March 13, 1993) to inaugurate the new location of The Rotunda Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, a public gallery run by the Fund for the Borough of Brooklyn. Pfaff also received a commission to create a permanent ceiling work in the old Reading Terminal, which will become part of the new Philadelphia Convention Center.

Kathan Brown's handbook *Ink, Paper, Metal, Wood: How to Recognize Contemporary Artists' Prints* is now available. This book will act as a catalog for an exhibition being circulated by the Trust for Museum Exhibitions in 1993 and 1994. Although more effectively used in conjunction with the exhibition, the Handbook can stand alone to help you learn to recognize lithographs, woodcuts, silkscreen prints, ink jet prints and a dozen kinds of intaglio prints, including etching, drypoint, engraving and aquatint. It is eight by ten inches in size and approximately 70 pages long. To order, please send a check for \$15 plus \$2 shipping (\$5 if outside the United States) to Crown Point Press, San Francisco. California residents must add sales tax of \$1.28 per book. *We will be sending the book soon to those of you who have already ordered it.*



Tom Marioni, *Process Landscape #34*, 1992, from a series of 47 watercolor monotypes, image and paper size: 30 x 21 1/4".

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