

The Museum of Modern Art

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A PRINT PROJECT BY CHUCK CLOSE

July 24 - September 28, 1993

An exhibition presenting American artist Chuck Close's most recent print project, *Alex/Reduction Block*, opens at The Museum of Modern Art on July 24, 1993. Organized by Andrea Feldman, curatorial assistant, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, **A PRINT PROJECT BY CHUCK CLOSE** comprises fifteen large-scale screenprints that depict Close's friend and fellow artist Alex Katz. The screenprints replicate all stages of what was originally a reduction linoleum-cut print. The exhibition, on view through September 28, examines the complex process of printmaking and offers an in-depth view of Close's artistic conception.

The reduction linoleum-cut technique requires the artist to use a single block for the entire printing process, in contrast to the conventional method of cutting separate blocks for each color in the print. Close became intrigued by the process after studying prints made by Picasso in the late 1950s. When Close anticipated problems with the paper he had chosen for his reduction linoleum-cut project, he printed a set of the states of the work on mylar, which he later used as templates for the screenprints on view in the exhibition.

Ms. Feldman states, "Over the two year period that it took to complete this impressive project, Close ran into many technical problems that he transformed into artistic challenges. Without a flaw, Close maneuvered through the obstacle course that the project presented and created an image of enormous power and intensity. His ability to find solutions offered by the

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present technology available to printmakers has brought new life to his complex and collaborative approach to printmaking."

Alex/Reduction Block was executed with the same systematic method of construction Close uses to create his oil portraits. The seven-by-five-foot prints comprise dots, dashes, and other marks which appear abstract when viewed at close range, but which from a distance reveal his subject's magnified head.

The print project consists of two distinct parts. The first, with seven state proofs, screenprinted in dark gray, records the surface of the linoleum block at each of the successive stages of carving. The second, with seven progressive proofs, shows the states as they were layered in a cumulative sequence, each state printed in successively darker tones of gray. The last progressive proof, consisting of seven layers of ink, is the project's final print.

Born in 1940 in Monroe, Washington, Chuck Close received his B.A. (1962) from the University of Washington, Seattle, and his B.F.A. (1963) and M.F.A. (1964) from Yale University. He studied on a Fulbright Grant at the Akademie der Bildenen Kunste, Vienna, before moving to New York in 1967. Widely-known for his large-scale oil portraits of family and friends, Close has also created prints in a variety of mediums since the 1970s. The Museum of Modern Art exhibited his first print project in 1973. In 1991, as part of the Museum's ongoing ARTIST'S CHOICE series, Close conceived and installed works from the collection, CHUCK CLOSE HEAD-ON/THE MODERN PORTRAIT.

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