

# OKTP

O K A Y T O P R I N T

MARCH 2021

## WOODY DE OTHELLO



Shifting Through Space, 2021

Color softground etching with aquatint. Paper Size: 43.5" x 37"; Edition of 40





Another Sleepless Night, 2021  
Color sugarlift and spitbit aquatints. Paper Size: 32.5" x 44"; Edition of 30





Steppin Through The Night, 2021  
Color softground etching with aquatint. Paper Size: 43.5" x 37"; Edition of 40

Woody De Othello's sculpture and works on paper both engage with the human body and other vessels in ways that are playful and serious. At first, his outsized ceramic representations of common objects—a house fan, a plant—can seem friendly or soft. The longer one gazes, however, the more ominous the objects seem. In his prints, every object seems to be melting into another.

-Kenneth Caldwell

**Kenneth Caldwell:** How many days have you been working at the press?

**Woody De Othello:** This is the fifth day I've been here.

**Q:** Have you ever done printing before?

**A:** Briefly, when I was in undergrad, but not etching.

**Q:** Did you see printing as an extension of your other works on paper? Or did you see it as a whole new experiment?

**A:** I definitely saw it as something to change up the way that I thought about making and putting together an image. I came in not having any expectations. I just came to the residency like a blank slate. They showed me different ways to make marks on copper plates. And we started from there.

**Q:** Do these prints feel different from your paintings? What does it feel like to draw everything in reverse?

**A:** This process really lends itself to layering and making more dense and complex images.



Isn't This Still Life, 2021  
Color sugarlift and spitbite aquatints and aquatint. Paper Size: 29.5" x 22.75"; Edition of 30

With the painting and the 2D stuff I've been doing, it adds this straightforward nature, so things are collapsing in a way where there's no differentiation between the figure and the objects, like flowers and space. So far, the prints look a lot different from what my work traditionally looks like.

Working in reverse hasn't really been an issue for me. I am not working with text, so it's been easy to navigate.

Printmaking is like alchemy, like putting something into a kiln and not knowing how it's going to come out. That's exciting.

I came here wanting to layer up the different lines and make an image. That's a little bit tricky, you have to sit with it a little bit longer to decipher what's going on.

**Q:** In your work, I feel a paradoxical tension. For example, your objects can be soft and friendly, but then you think, wait a minute, this enormous fan could collapse on me. It's soft and ominous simultaneously. There is also a tension between nostalgic icons and this mad digital era.

**A:** One thing that I've had in my mind is to make images that feel a little bit more hopeful. I feel like I'm definitely getting that across here. This was the jumping off point. I'm trying to bring a little bit more brightness to counteract all of the craziness going on.

**Q:** Do you work on one image and then go to the next? Or





Bright Spots, 2021  
Color sugarlift aquatint and spitbite aquatint. Paper Size: 29.5" x 22.75"; Edition of 30

are you working on all the images at once?

**A:** I feel like we're working on all the plates at the same time. I feel like I started with this one, *Isn't This Still Life*. And while this plate was getting processed, I started layering different lines on this one, *Bright Spots*. And this print, *About That Time*, went through so many different transitions.

**Q:** What I'm seeing is quite vibrant. Can you tell me a little more about *About That Time*.

**A:** I wanted to make these compositions that were dense and, as I said, layered. It takes a little time for the print to reveal itself. Here there is an arm that loops around. And this shirt in the back became a type of wallpaper. And there's another hand clutching the inside of some thighs. All this stuff got lost in the way I handled the colors. It's like I broke the image apart.

I wasn't filling in these objects. I was bouncing around to make the images a little bit more dense.

**Q:** What has printmaking offered you that working on paper or painting hasn't?

**A:** Printmaking gave me more space to be spontaneous. I love that about making plates and seeing how prints turn out.

**Q:** In your everyday activities, do you carry a sketchbook around with you to make notes or sketches spontaneously?



About That Time, 2021  
Color softground etching and spitbite aquatint with drypoint. Paper Size: 29.5" x 22.75"; Edition of 30

**A:** I sketch, and I take notes. But at the press, I'm breaking things down in a way that it feels a lot more free.

**Q:** How might that influence what you do next, outside of the press?

**A:** I'm really attracted to how things can fall apart, how you can start to make out different shapes or different parts of an image. I am attracted to the layering.

The paintings I was making before are super tight. I would get a little bit bored and rush to finish them so I could move on to the next thing. Here, I like breaking down the figure in space and the things around the figure in space. It's closer to what I have been getting with the sculptures.