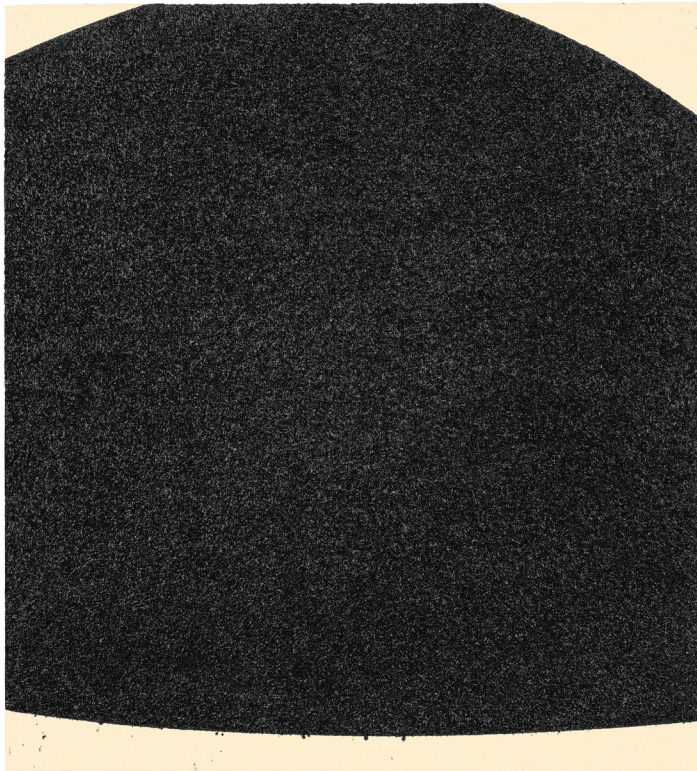

Cristea Roberts Gallery

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Richard Serra The Final Works

13 March – 26 April 2025



Casablanca #3, 2022
Hand-applied oil stick, etching ink and silica on Igarashi 430gsm handmade paper
Paper and Image: 167.9 x 152.9 cm - 66 1/8 x 60 1/4 inches. Edition of 27

Marking the first anniversary of Richard Serra's death at the age of 85, Cristea Roberts Gallery presents the final works made by the artist (13 March - 26 April 2025).

The first complete showing of these works outside the US focuses on two series of prints made using black oil stick. Serra, one of the most significant artists of his generation, was known for monumental steel sculptures. However, his explorations of form, mass and gravity informed every aspect of his art, including his works on paper.

Casablanca 1-6, 2022 and *Hitchcock I-III, 2024* mark the culmination of over fifty years of printmaking. Although described as prints, none of these works passed through a press and the methods used are unlike those of traditional printmaking; Serra's chosen media undermines our understanding of what constitutes an editioned work.

Each work was made using oil stick, a combination of pigment, linseed oil, and melted wax. The mixture was moulded into large cylindrical sticks, then pressed down into a meat grinder and blended in an industrial dough mixer with silica.

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The mixture was applied in layers, by a gloved hand, directly onto handmade paper, pushing and rubbing in a downward direction. Each layer required weeks of drying time before an additional coat could be applied. As a result, each impression varies in its construction.

For each work, layer upon layer of black oil stick was built up so that an intensely textured and rich three-dimensional surface emerges, evoking a large void. This imposing effect of black absorbing and reflecting light, dominates Serra's prints. When making works on paper Serra remained committed to using a single palette of black to investigate weight, stability, and density. Serra commented "*Black is a property, not a quality. In terms of weight, black is heavier, creates a larger volume, holds itself in a more compressed field. It is comparable to forging.*"

The mass of black in each work, which almost fills the entire sheets in *Casablanca* and *Hitchcock*, is relieved by thin areas of paper that appear to rise or emerge from curved edges and corners. Serra examines tension and gravity through this unequal balance of heavy mass and handmade Japanese paper. The paper support almost appears precarious; each impression of *Casablanca*, measuring over 150cm in width, weighs nearly 10 kilograms.

Serra was interested in how an artwork not only exists in space but reorientates it. His sculptures created environments that had to be walked through or around to be fully experienced. Serra's printmaking extends these investigations, interrogating the physical relationship of mass and the flat surface, and the viewers relationship to it.

The exhibition also features examples of earlier uses of black oil stick and etchings by the artist dating from 2004, and a display of the tools used to create these groundbreaking works.

Richard Serra: The Final Works demonstrates how the artist's radical techniques and exceptional approach to making editions, remains singular in the history of printmaking.

Since presenting the first exhibition in the UK devoted to Serra's prints in 2013, Cristea Roberts Gallery has continued to exclusively exhibit the artist's editions in Europe. The works on show were developed by Serra with Gemini G.E.L., an artists' workshop and publisher in Los Angeles, where Serra made all his editions, a collaboration that lasted for over fifty years.

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About the artist

Richard Serra (1938 - 2024) was born in San Francisco, USA. He lived and worked in New York, and the North Fork of Long Island, and Nova Scotia. From 1957 to 1961 Serra studied at the University of California at Berkeley and Santa Barbara, and from 1961 to 1964 at Yale University, Connecticut, where he worked with Josef Albers on Albers seminal book, *Interaction of Color* (New Haven, 1963). His first solo exhibition was held at Galleria La Salita, Rome, in 1966 and the Pasadena Art Museum staged his first solo museum exhibition in 1970.

Serra's large-scale, site-specific sculptures, featuring monumental arcs, spirals, and ellipses can be found all over the world. Selected solo exhibitions and retrospectives include Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel (2017); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2017); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2014); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2011); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2011); Menil Collection, Houston (2011); Monumenta, Grand Palais, Paris (2008); Kunsthau Bregenz (2008); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2006); San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art (2006); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao (2005); Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Naples (2004); Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, St. Louis (2003). His works are housed in major collections all over the world.

Serra participated in international exhibitions including Documenta, Kassel (1972, 1977, 1982, and 1987); the Venice Biennale (1980, 1984, 2001, and 2013); and the Whitney Museum of American Art's Annual and Biennial exhibitions (1968, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1995, and 2006).

Serra was the recipient of many notable prizes and awards. In 2015, he was awarded Les Insignes de Chevalier de l'Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur, France, and in 2018 he received the J. Paul Getty Medal, which honors extraordinary contributions to the practice, understanding, and support of the arts. Prior to this he was also awarded Orden de las Artes y las Letras de España, Spain in 2008 and Orden pour le Mérite für Wissenschaften und Künste, Federal Republic of Germany in 2002.

Richard Serra passed away aged 85 on 26 March 2024 in New York, USA.

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About Cristea Roberts Gallery

Cristea Roberts Gallery is a leading international contemporary art gallery with a particular focus on original prints and works on paper. Since its inception, the gallery has commissioned a significant number of editions by a wide range of artists, whilst also representing others for their unique works. The underlying ethos of the gallery has always been artist-led. It was originally founded in 1995 as the Alan Cristea Gallery and changed its name in September 2019 to Cristea Roberts Gallery.

Acknowledged as one of the leading galleries in its field of specialty, the gallery's programme is dedicated to publishing, cataloguing, exhibiting and dealing in original prints and drawings by its roster of over 30 important international artists and Estates. It participates in all the major international art fairs and has a dynamic programme of exhibitions hosted in its bespoke space in Pall Mall, London.

The gallery works closely with international museums on acquisitions and loans, and examples of its editions are held in major public collections around the world including Tate, London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Visitor information

Tues - Fri 11 am - 5.30pm
Sat 11 am - 2pm
Closed 18 - 21 April 2025

Closed on Mondays, Sundays and public holidays
Free admission

Travel: Piccadilly or Green Park underground station
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Saturday 15 March 2025

Breakfast opening reception 11am - 2pm
Guided tour 11.30am

RSVP required via events@cristearoberts.com