

# The Museum of Modern Art

## MoMA ANNOUNCES EXHIBITION FOCUSED ON THE WORK OF MASTER PRINTER AND PUBLISHER JACOB SAMUEL

### This Collection-Based Exhibition Highlights Samuel's Collaborations with Artists Including Mona Hatoum, Rebecca Horn, Jannis Kounellis, Wangechi Mutu, Barry McGee, and Christopher Wool

**NEW YORK, November 9, 2022**—The Museum of Modern Art announces *New Ground: Jacob Samuel and Contemporary Etching*, a focused exhibition on the work of master printer and publisher Jacob Samuel (American, b. 1951). On view from October 29, 2023, through March 16, 2024, the exhibition highlights Samuel's championing of the foundational printing technique of etching, his innovative approach to collaborating with contemporary artists, and works that push the limits of the medium. MoMA began acquiring works published by Jacob Samuel in 1988 and, three decades later, it holds his entire catalogue of more than 60 projects. *New Ground* will selectively draw from this expansive body of work by a diverse range of artists, including Mona Hatoum, Rebecca Horn, Jannis Kounellis, Wangechi Mutu, Barry McGee, and Christopher Wool. *New Ground: Jacob Samuel and Contemporary Etching* is organized by Esther Adler, Curator, and Margarita Lizcano Hernandez, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints.

Over the course of four decades, Samuel collaborated with more than 60 artists, traveling extensively to do so. Through a traditional but maximally flexible approach, he was driven to prove that etching could be a successful contemporary medium. The exhibition will draw from a range of these collaborative projects. For example, Samuel made it possible for the artist Rebecca Horn to avoid working in reverse, generally considered a requirement in printmaking, by printing her delicate webs of red lines on custom-made transparent paper, which was ultimately inverted. Moreover, his design and use of a portable aquatint box allowed him to travel to artists' studios, which allowed Jannis Kounellis to use sculptural processes, not easily transferred to a printshop setting, on copper etching plates. But this belief in traditional processes did not prevent him from embracing other techniques in order to achieve an artist's vision. Works by Wangechi Mutu and Barry McGee include elements of collage, and are trimmed to the image size, without the expected borders of a printed image. Successive projects with Christopher Wool over the course of over twenty years are particular evidence of a generative partnership. *New Ground* will highlight Samuel's breadth of knowledge, historical expertise, and unwavering commitment, which made him an ideal partner for artists new to the medium.

Born and raised in Santa Monica, California, Samuel began his career as a master printer for the Abstract Expressionist painter Sam Francis. Having worked extensively on Francis's monumental, multicolour aquatints for eighteen years, Samuel was drawn instead to publish a very different type of work under his own name: small scale, serial, and generally printed

in a single tone. A continually expanding network of friends and creators made introductions, and Samuel began to work with some of the most influential artists of the 20th and 21st century. He collaborated with painters, sculptors, performance artists, and musicians to make etchings that reflected their overall artistic practices. Despite the diverse range of artists, certain common themes arise with consideration of Samuel's imprint as a whole: the depiction or impression of the body on a printing matrix, for example, or a system of images that unfolds across multiple sheets of paper. Many of the projects include texts written by the artists, a further invitation to close looking. As with everything published by Jacob Samuel, each project has a custom-designed housing that expands the work's presence into three dimensions. The breadth, variety, and, above all, creativity in the works he published with an exceptional list of artists is evidence of his success in bringing the tradition of old master printmaking to contemporary artistic practices.

**PUBLICATIONS:**

The exhibition will be accompanied by the first publication dedicated to the work of the master printer Jacob Samuel. The richly illustrated catalogue will feature an essay by curator Esther Adler, interviews with a dozen of the artists Samuel has worked with, and a highly researched checklist detailing every project published by Jacob Samuel.

**SPONSORSHIP:**

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