

Jonas Wood
in Conversation with
Jacob Samuel

Jacob Samuel has been printing etchings for forty-two years. Since 2016, he has been actively working with Jonas Wood on prints published by WKS Editions, though their first collaboration was in 2014. The conversation that follows is a dedicated overview of Wood's diverse printmaking practice.

JACOB SAMUEL In 2013, when we started working on our first collaboration, *8 Etchings* [2014], you brought a very large book from 1970 of Picasso's *347 Series* [1968] to the studio that your grandfather had given you.

JONAS WOOD Yes. He was a collector and he had a lot of books. When he started getting older, he asked us to think about what art or books we might want. He had this giant box that said "Picasso" and I knew I wanted it, but I don't think I even knew what was inside!

Years later I inherited it and it had all of these etchings.

JS It was the *347 Series*, which he made in the South of France later in life. There are a lot of erotic etchings in that series.

JW Yes. And interestingly, I bought a Picasso etching about a year ago, only to realize later that it is in that catalogue.

JS Well, that's fortuitous. It's interesting to note that the printer Picasso worked with on those etchings, Aldo Crommelynck, moved to the South of France with his brother and set up a little etching shop in a bakery near where Picasso lived so they could work closely with him. In addition to that particular series, Picasso made hundreds of etchings over those few years. The Crommelyncks would set up maybe fifty plates at night, then drop them

off at his studio and pick them up once Picasso was done drawing on them.

JW So it wasn't like he made one a day; he would work on a bunch all at once?

JS Yes, he'd stay up all night.

JW Why do you think he signed the date on the plate rather than on the paper, knowing it would be printed backward?

JS He dated almost everything he did—paintings, prints. That allowed all the work to be seen as a diary, meaning you could have a complete sense of where he was at, who he was hanging out with, who he was in love with.

JW Yes, and it's usually the exact date that's written. But with etchings, most artists intentionally invert the numbers to print in positive. Picasso didn't seem to mind that the dates would be printed backward.

JS The dates were a record-keeping device.

JW That makes me wonder about the image—was he so adept at drawing and understanding the etching process that the mirror image was never a problem when he was drawing a face? He would have to be drawing the face knowing that when it was printed, it would be flipped.

JS Yes, a mirror image.

JW He must have been so skilled at drawing and knowing what would happen—it wasn't like he was transferring images to make sure they would work in reverse. He was just free-form drawing.

JS Well, sometimes with lithography, he would use transfer paper. But with etching, he was drawing directly on the plate. Picasso really challenged all the printmaking processes. With sugar-lift aquatint,

he would deliberately grease the plate so that the ink solution would bead up and he'd have to work in a way that's really impossible. Yet he made these incredibly detailed portraits and studies and landscapes working against the process. With linoleum cut, he invented reductive printing by making all of the colors from the same plate, which meant he had to see the finished print at the start of the process. He'd work on a single color, print all fifty sheets; then he'd work on the plate some more and print that plate on top in a different color, then work on the plate some more, always taking more away. He would reduce the surface of the plate to create a six- or seven-color linoleum cut, which is, again, a process he invented.

JW It's interesting to think about the visual and spatial ability he needed to figure out how those things were going to work. When I'm painting, I think about printmaking, in the sense that I'm going from the back to the front of the image—the last things that you put on a painting are probably also the last things that you would add to a print.

JS Yes, that's a really good point. And it's interesting to hear you talking about your own painting process and the way you build a painting. Looking at your paintings, one of the things that's so great about them, for me, is how uninflected and flat they are. And yet there's so much nuance and depth created in the way you use color.

You grew up around Boston, right?

JW Yes.

JS Did you go to museums when you were young?

JW Yes.

JS What museums did you like? What art got you excited?

JW Well, certainly the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I have always liked modern painting, but

I was definitely interested in figuration when I was younger. I tried to paint or draw the figure, but I was never really accurate. The modern masters were interesting because they had created their own language in figuration—without necessarily capturing reality. I remember seeing a lot of Alexander Calder, and a Roy Lichtenstein show when I was pretty young that I liked. There was also a lot of art from Asia, like Japanese scrolls.

Both of my parents were into art. My father was an architect and my mother was a drama teacher. We went to a lot of interesting buildings, too, like Walter Gropius's house, or places like that. We went to the [Isabella Stewart] Gardner Museum, the deCordova [Sculpture Park and] Museum, and other smaller ones too. And my parents would take us to New York, where we would visit the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Whitney [Museum of American Art].

JS That's pretty exciting.

JW Yes. And my grandfather collected art, which meant I grew up with art actually in our house. That was kind of a big deal for me. He had a giant Francis Bacon painting, Picasso prints, and Calder drawings. At the time, I didn't understand how important or unique that was, but when I went to grad school, I realized my environment was culturally rich, with modern painting especially.

JS Art was in your life, and when you are a child that feels natural. Why would you think about it any differently?

JW My parents had Andy Warhol's pink and green cow prints, which felt important, but really, it was an open-edition wallpaper that came in a couple of different colors. Still, we had this downstairs, all eighteen years that I lived in my parents' house. And we had Matisse prints, editions from the 1940s and '50s.

JS Wow. Were they in color?

JW Yes, in color, with hearts in them. They were very panoramic.

JS That's pretty radical. You were seeing a lot of art regularly at a young age. My next question was going to be about your first encounter with printed artwork. But if you're living in a house with Warhol and Matisse prints—and the Matisse prints, they sound like ones from later in his life, maybe the pochoir prints.

JW They were definitely coming from the cutouts, but they were prints, so they were later in life, for sure.

JS That's really cool.

JW One of my sisters still has both of those prints. And there was a Rauschenberg print that we grew up with too. I have that in my studio, inherited from my grandfather.

JS I didn't realize you'd inherited that print.

JW Yes, and one Calder drawing from 1962.

JS Calder always looks really fresh, really immediate.

JW Yes. We just got a poster—the Los Angeles County Museum of Art had a show in 1965 and they made a silkscreen poster. It wasn't an edition, just a poster. It's amazing how it looks brand-new. I do really connect with the flatness, the shapes, and the specific colors he would use. There's not much information, but you know it's Calder. That was his language.

JS In one of the prints you made for the *8 Etchings* portfolio, there's a poster of the Cure on the wall. That was something you grew up with, a reference to your life. Was that in your sister's room?

JW Yes, she's about six years older than me,

and she had this giant the Cure poster up in her room forever. I decided to make a painting of it later. I found the same poster at a yard sale in Mar Vista, California. Now it hangs in a closet in my new studio.

JS You know, there's a whole history of interesting ornamental rock-and-roll posters.

JW Yes, for sure.

JS Particularly coming out of the 1960s. And it's been continued. So, I was wondering whether you got a BFA?

JW No, I got a BA in psychology, but my minor was studio art. I wanted to be a doctor; then I took a year off, and it became clear that I really didn't want to be a doctor. So in my senior year, I started taking art more seriously, really learning how to paint. After college, I had a studio and decided to get an MFA at the University of Washington in Seattle.

JS When you were in that MFA program, did you have an opportunity to make any prints?

JW I made a couple prints, actually. I made some etchings. But none of them were editions. I was just messing around.

JS Oh, really?

JW Yes. I mean, I had made things in silkscreen, like psychedelic stuff, right out of college in 1999. Then I made some T-shirts with my friends, Red Sox T-shirts that we would sell outside of games.

JS That's pretty cool. [*Laughs*]

JW Based on our favorite player. Actually, we almost got arrested because we were selling them illegally. We made a T-shirt of one player whose nickname was El Guapo—he was the closer for the



Jonas Wood and his dog Robot in Wood's studio, Culver City, CA, August 2009.
 On wall, from left: three screen prints (all 2010, shown in progress); *Untitled (The Silver and Black)* (2009, shown in progress)

[Boston] Red Sox. And at a playoff game, we had these big black plastic trash bags full of T-shirts. My friend and I were both selling them for like ten bucks each, but then my friend almost got arrested. He got a ticket instead, but they took the shirts. Later, he fought the ticket and they gave him the shirts back.

JS Glad to hear that. Do you still have one of those shirts?

JW I might have one and my dad might have one.

In 2004, I made the *Wicked Curse Reversed* poster with my friend the artist Matt Johnson. The Red Sox won the World Series in 2004. When we were growing up in Massachusetts, everybody would say the team was cursed because we traded Babe Ruth for, like, a bag of prunes or something. So when they won, we decided we should make an edition. It was an edition of eighty-six, because that's how many years it had been since they'd won a World Series.

JS That's really great.

JW It said “Wicked Curse Reversed,” because people who live in Boston say “wicked.” Anyway, that was five years after grad school—

JS That’s your first limited-edition print.

JW Yes. And then a couple of years later I made these Larry Bird basketball ones.

JS Are those T-shirts?

JW I made T-shirts, but I also printed a couple on pieces of paper. I never really editioned them though.

JS And you printed these yourself?

JW Yes, I printed them myself, in the studio, as silkscreens. Again, that was a little bit later. Maybe I was a late bloomer. When I moved to Los Angeles in 2004 I learned a lot because I had exposure to other artists—seeing other artists’ studios, working for artists. Anything I made in grad school was only scratching the surface of the materials.

JS Of course. In my experience as a teacher, as I watch students in the print studio, I can see it’s really difficult for them to retain much of the technical information about etching. Often when they do something great, they are not really sure how they’ve done it, because they’ve only done it once. It takes prolonged exposure and experience to really figure things out.

JW Yes. Most kids who go to art school are talented, so they have the ability to make something that’s interesting. But to start making stuff that transcends learning about the materials and to have it be personal, your own sort of story—that’s what’s been really interesting to me about making prints for the last five or six years. It’s just been super rewarding because I’m so much more aware of myself as an artist. When we started the *8 Etchings* you wanted to make a bunch of my old

work into etchings. And my first question was like, “Well, how are we going to make all these flat areas of color work, because my paintings have so much flatness in them? How am I going to make all these flat tonal shapes?” And you were like, “Well, we’re going to make those with line.” And I was dumbfounded. But then you said something really interesting. You said that I have a very particular line.

JS I would say idiosyncratic.

JW Idiosyncratic. [*Laughs*]

JS Yes, it is. And I mean that in the best possible sense. Your line is so personal.

JW You made me think about that, and being limited to only using line was a really interesting challenge. If you hadn’t set those guidelines at the start, then I probably would have tried to figure out a way to do what we just did in 2017, to use aquatint and spit bite to create those flat areas. But I am so grateful, because it made more sense to arrive at that, you know, five years later. It was way better to start with just the line and the accumulation of the lines. Like [Giovanni Battista] Piranesi—it’s all about cross-hatching, or not just cross-hatching, but how everything that he made was drawn out of a line. There were no flat shapes. Everything was crosshatched, or lines coming together to create something.

JS Well, that’s one of the beautiful things about studying your precedents and old master prints like Albrecht Dürer’s. I think of Dürer as being very formal and stylized, the same as Piranesi. They created amazing volume and beautiful shape only using line.

JW Yes. Line, but also black and white.

JS Yes.

JW For the most part, there was no color.

JS No, and I imagine that was a huge challenge for you because you're known for your work in color. So to start out with a limited monochromatic palette must have been hard.

JW Yes. It was good, though.

JS At this point, do you ever look at the many kinds of print media as ways to explore different aspects of your paintings? In other words, can you specifically hone in on certain things, like, "Oh, I think this might be interesting as a litho, or maybe this would be good as an etching, or I could explore this as a screen print"?

JW Well, I've been thinking about that more and more. When we first started in 2014 it felt like a tutorial for me—even though I'm an artist and I have my own ideas, I felt like you were teaching me about the materials. And it was great to have you pushing me into certain things, because I didn't really see my work through this lens of printmaking until after we started. A couple of years into it, I started realizing that etching and mark making came into my paintings and I became more aware of it while I was painting. After that, I started to realize that the way I painted was almost an accumulation of different printing methods. And recently, you mentioned that we should try a twenty-five-color silkscreen print because it relates so well to how I paint. That prompted me to see it more in my own work and to want to explore printmaking based on certain kinds of paintings, how I layer things, how I incorporate underpaint and then overpaint details on top. And in the last few years I've made prints that delve into the collage aspect of my practice. I've made a couple of prints with Cirrus where we used a lithograph of a photograph and then printed silkscreen on top of that, which really synced up with my sensibility and how I see things.

I've started to collect prints and look at prints and see how other people have made prints—I just got this Lichtenstein print, a brushstroke one.

And when I started examining it, I discovered how amazing it was that Lichtenstein could really translate his work so directly into printmaking.

So yes, it really opens up—a few years after we started, I realized that drawing had always informed my painting; then I saw how collage had informed my painting. But once printmaking entered the equation, that also started informing my painting, and vice versa. Even when thinking about the process of making a painting, I started taking cues from printmaking and putting them back into paintings, though I was probably doing that before and didn't realize. Now I'm more aware that I can adopt some of these techniques that we're using in printmaking to my paintings. I don't mean actually screen-printing on a painting, though that occurred to me recently, because in the last year and a half I made giant notepad paintings where we actually silkscreened the notepad logos onto the canvas. And of course, there are artists like Christopher Wool and Laura Owens who are making paintings that have vast amounts of silkscreen prints on them. So that's really exciting. I mean, I don't know how far it will go with me, but I definitely think that as I've learned more about printmaking, it's informed my practice.

JS In the last five years you've worked with quite a few printers and publishers. What are some of the different things you've learned and been able to accomplish working with these different people and things? Every professional master printer has evolved their own way of working and their own technique. So as an artist working with different printers you must be picking up quite a lot of information.

JW Yes, definitely. I've been working with Jean Milant at Cirrus. And actually, before I had my first solo show, I was in a three-person group show at his gallery in 2006. I didn't know much about him, but he wanted to show my paintings, so I went to his gallery and realized that he was a historical printmaker. He had made all of this amazing stuff with artists I love, like Ed Ruscha—



Jean Milant with some of Jonas Wood's lithograph-screen prints at Cirrus Gallery & Cirrus Editions Ltd., Los Angeles, April 2014

JS He made those prints with Ruscha where the words look like liquid.

JW Yes, exactly. And John Baldessari and—

JS Joe Goode.

JW Chris Burden.

JS To me, Jean Milant is the great unsung hero of Los Angeles printmaking. He doesn't get the credit he deserves.

JW When I first met him, I was really turned on by this idea of printmaking, but it took a few years for us to start collaborating. When we did, it was my first real experience making a set of editions with a print house. We made three prints that were all based on still lifes with plants, and I experimented with the combination of lithography and silkscreen. That's pretty much what we focused on. There were a couple of other artists around my age working there at the same time, like Matthew Brannon was making some great prints—he's an amazing printmaker.

JS Yes. His last show was epic.

JW Yes, it was incredible. Nobody makes prints like that. Anyway, Jean showed me the ropes and taught me about the history of printmaking at the same time. I still remember a couple of things he said that were really poignant, like how you can't just make one print and stop, that printmaking is something you have to continue to do. And of course, we've made about seven editions since then. But what I took from that was how serious he was about printmaking and that I should take it seriously too. He told me amazing stories about people coming in and making prints with him.

JS Sure.

JW The first time I made prints with him was in 2009. Then, a year later, we made a series of monoprints. They were monoprints on a lithograph, which I had never even thought about doing. You paint a plate, print it once, and then it would pull a bunch of color off, so you'd paint it again. This was totally different than the first set of editions, which were three set prints that didn't really vary. Actually, I haven't done monoprints again, so it would be interesting to revisit.

The next big project I made with him was a series of birdcage prints.

JS Oh, those are really nice.

JW Basically, we printed all the birds and the birdcages, and then I hand-drew all of the details of the birds on each one. I guess that's called a unique—

JS Actually, with Sam Francis, we called it an edition of unique variants.

JW Yes. That's a good way to describe it, unique variants. That was 2011, and then in 2014, I made some of my most successful prints, where I merged a collage concept with lithography to make cutout photos of landscape pots with

silkscreened plants “growing” out of them. It was a great learning experience, because I had never used a photolithograph—I'd always used the lithograph as a drawing source. Though, in my first set made in 2009 with Jean, we used the impression of wood grain on a lithograph to make a floor plane in the still life. We've made other things since then. It's like he said—“You can't stop.”

JS And somebody who worked at Cirrus for a while, who was a great lithographer before working there and who has continued to be a great lithographer, who also doesn't get the attention that he deserves—because he's a very quiet person—is Ed Hamilton. You've done a lot of work now with Ed.

JW Yes. I love Ed and Pat Hamilton at Hamilton Press. I started working with them in 2011. The first big studio that I rented in 2007 in Culver City [California] was owned by Ed Ruscha, so he was my landlord for ten years. *[Laughs]* It was Ed Ruscha who introduced me to them.

JS Their history goes all the way back to the Tamarind workshop, when Tamarind Institute was in LA.

JW Yes, exactly. Ed Ruscha actually bought some of the monoprints I had made at Cirrus, of those Greek pots. He asked me if I was interested in meeting Ed Hamilton, so I went to his place on Abbot Kinney Boulevard, and when you go there, it's smoky and amazing and there is all this history—he's made some of the most amazing Ruscha prints in the last twenty-five years.

JS Yes. The definitive Ed Ruscha lithos are via Hamilton.

JW The first thing I wanted to do was to re-create a drawing I'd done on black paper with white pencil. And it blew my mind when he said, “Well, I think we should print it on blue paper.” He has a vast

knowledge of different papers and he understands how the paper functions as part of the print. He thought we should use a cool-blue paper, so that when we printed on it, it really looked the way I wanted it to.

The way they do business was a shift for me as well. They would take care of everything and just give me half of the edition to keep. That was really exciting for me, because before that, I wasn't able to keep a lot of my prints.

JS That's great.

JW And right around this time Ed Ruscha had told me that he kept a lot of his prints, which meant that he could either gift or have museums acquire his whole archive. That was eye-opening, because when you're younger, you don't always start realizing those things until it's too late.

JS Sure.

JW There's a lot of power in keeping things, because you're able to amass a whole archive of your own work.

So that was 2011. Then, three years later, we made a second print, of an interior.

JS Right, I remember this one.

JW This was based on a painting. Actually, Ed Hamilton picked this out: he came to my studio and saw a black-and-white drawing of a Martha's Vineyard interior from my parents' house there, and he loved it. He decided to use three different colors of paper but print the exact same colors, which allowed us to create three different times of day in the same room.

JS That's really smart.

JW It's just the way his mind works. He realizes that printing on a gray piece of paper is going to feel like dusk, a reddish piece of paper is going to

feel like dawn, and a brighter white piece of paper is going to feel like noon. So that was amazing, because it's the same print, but each one really feels like a different time of day, which is genius.

The next project we made was in 2015 based on making a couple of my wife [Shio Kusaka]'s pots as prints, these Greek dinosaur pots in orange. And again, he picked this really interesting green paper and made a gradient of color on the pot. We talked about it, because of course it's a collaboration, but he made a gradient from light to dark as the pot goes down—

JS Lithographers call that "split fountain."

JW When he did that, he gave the print a whole new depth.

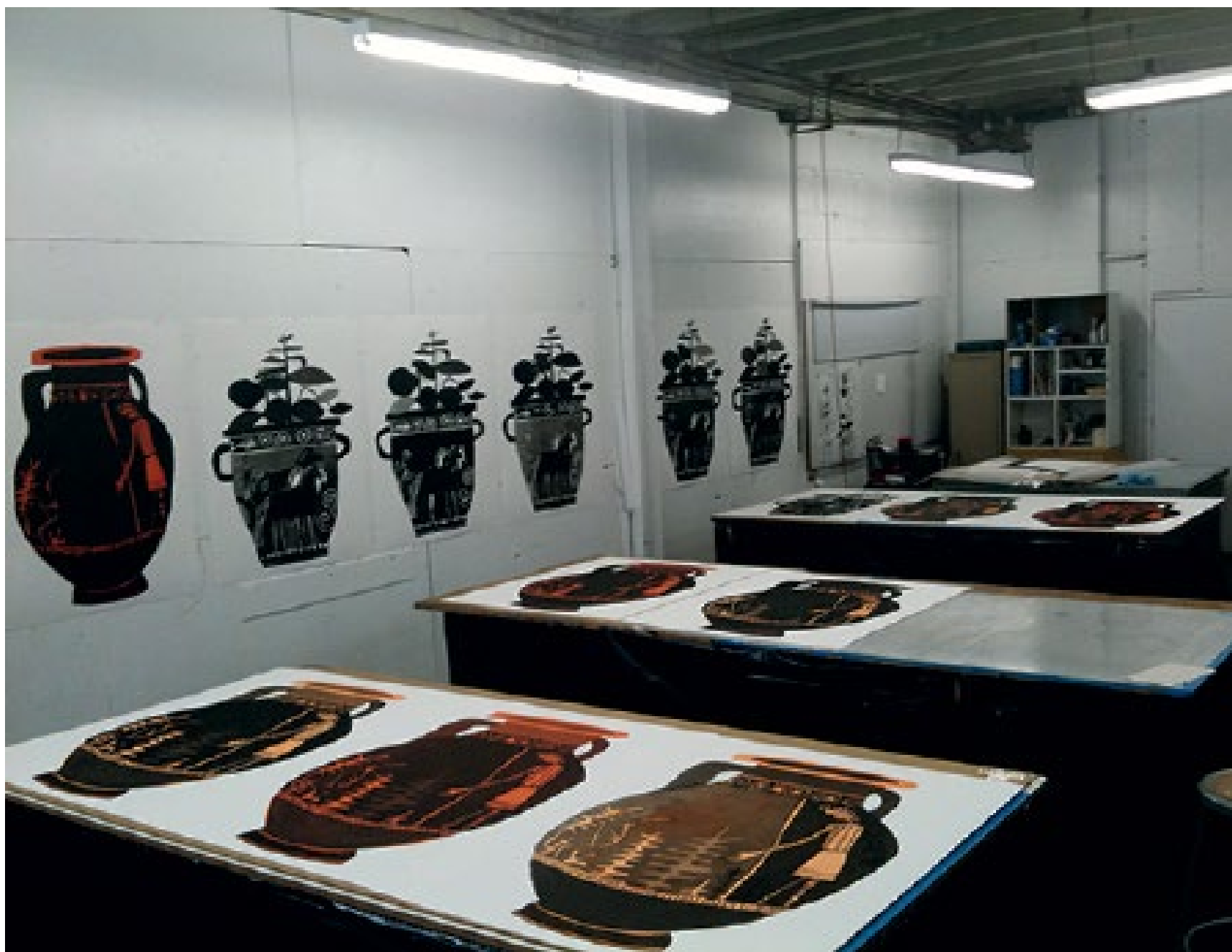
JS Yes. It really gives the pot a lot of volume.

JW Yes, it gives it volume even though we're dealing with a lot of flatness. After 2014, we made many more prints. In 2017, we made double basketball orchids, where again, I wanted a cream-colored paper and thought to print on a black background as well. We used the exact same plates, but we had black overlay the rest of the print. Afterward, he told me that it's really difficult to print on black.

JS Oh yes, that's very difficult.

JW We didn't get as many out of that edition—there's never a set number with Hamilton. If they turn out well, that's how big the edition is, and if it's harder—like the black one was harder; it was only an edition of fifteen, and the cream-colored one was twenty-six.

JS An interesting note about edition size is that Universal Limited Art Editions, who was the first real fine-art publisher of the print renaissance, based an edition size on whatever the printer could get in one run in one day.



Monoprints in production at Cirrus Gallery & Cirrus Editions Ltd., Los Angeles, June 2010

JW Oh, wow.

JS Yes. So whatever you got in a day, that's what the edition size was.

JW That's pretty limited.

JS Well, if you got twenty-seven on the first day, then that's what it was. Every day after, you'd do twenty-seven until you finished the print.

JW That's interesting. The more recent prints with

Hamilton were a couple sets of notepad doodles. I sketch painting ideas on notepads in my studio, and I told him that I wanted to make oversize notepad prints with the painting ideas on them. This was the first time I was making a print of a casual drawing as opposed to a super-sharp specific image. It was cool to see how that translated as a print, because it feels really immediate.

JS You know, the fact that these notepad prints became a fourteen-color lithograph totally takes it out of the realm of casual drawing. It really becomes

a substantial piece of art. You've given it so much richness and depth by applying so many different colors and layers.

JW Exactly.

JS It takes a casual drawing and makes it into something very formal.

JW Yes, I agree with that, but at the same time it still has the casual vibe to it, where you can tell it's an idea. It's still a very specific and beautiful print, but ultimately, it's a print of a painting idea.

JS You've also worked with a different printer to make full-color prints with a letterpress, which is unusual.

JW Yes. Leslie Ross-Robertson owns a letterpress company—

JS Yes, called Wavelength Press.

JW We're friends, so she approached me about making a print. She makes artist prints, but she also makes stationery and other things like that.

JS Ephemera.

JW Yes, but very beautiful. I was fascinated by the technique, because you're embossing the paper at the same time you're printing on it. When you press it into a letterpress, the paper actually takes the form of the plate at the same time it takes the color.

The first thing we made in 2012 was a tennis court print. The result was spectacular; in fact, I wish we'd made more in the edition. It was only 8 by 11 inches, printed in four colors with four passes. A couple of years later, she wanted to do a much more complicated print. In the end, we made an eighteen-color, nineteen-pass letterpress print, which she said was unheard of.

JS Yes. It's a beauty.

JW It's not very big, because her press is small. The print is about 11 by 20 inches and based on a painting show I had in 2010 at the Hammer Museum [in Los Angeles] of my Calder plant paintings. The print turned out amazing. I definitely want to make more with her in the future. I love working with somebody who doesn't just work with artists. It's exciting. And her skill level is very impressive.

JS It really is.

JW Her ability to match the colors is amazing.

JS The palette in that print is quite beautiful.

JW Those were really time-consuming, though. She's a one-woman team with a little shop at the back of her house.

JS And the collaboration grew out of your friendship, so it was very natural.

JW Yes, very natural. She teaches letterpress printing at Otis [College of Art and Design in Los Angeles].

JS Maybe we could talk about your relationship with Karma in New York?

JW Yes, Brendan Dugan runs [bookseller/art gallery] Karma and [graphic design/art direction firm] An Art Service, and besides making prints with him, which we're about to do for the first time, we've made four—soon to be five—books with him. In the last couple of years, he's started to publish prints, including *Four Majors*, which are four tennis court prints we are making together, taking earlier images, separating the colors, and silkscreen-printing them. It's fun because we're using a company in New York that works with artists but also silkscreens posters and clothing, which is different from working with Hamilton Press, Cirrus, or other

master printers. It's kind of cool. Brendan is a good friend, so collaborating and making books with him is fun and easy.

JS Speaking of books, you and Shio [Kusaka] have self-published a series of books on other artists.

JW Yes. When I was growing up, my grandfather owned these mini books, which had been published by this French company, ABC Tudor Publishing Co. They were little pamphlets about Van Gogh, Monet—

JS I know the ones you're talking about.

JW I inherited them. Then, later, I had an idea about appropriating them. There's so much appropriation in my work already, it felt natural to appropriate these mini books, but [to] pick out artists working today—these books were mass-produced, they were made to get the message out there.

JS Yes.

JW They weren't deep, historical books. It was more like something you'd hand out on the street in front of a museum for five bucks. We decided to make a bunch of mini books, so we copied the format, the scale, the size, and even included only black-and-white pictures in the essays. We made books on Shio, Matt Johnson, Ry Rocklen, Amanda Ross-Ho, Tony Matelli, Mark Grotjahn, Anne Collier, Brian Sharp, William J. O'Brien—it's been on hiatus for three or four years but I'm definitely ready to pick it back up. It was a really fun experience. We made nine, plus a Japanese translation of Shio's book.

JS That's a lot of books. That's a serious endeavor.

JW They weren't too thick, but they were really fun, and everybody seemed to respond to them super well. And I liked the idea that we were publishing

historical art books with younger contemporary artists. We sold them for fourteen dollars or less, so it was affordable for a fan or anyone who just wanted to buy some ephemera.

JS You did one screen print with Counter Editions in London.

JW Yes, and we're going to make another one pretty soon. Counter Editions approached me—Carl Freedman has a gallery called Carl Freedman Gallery, and he also has this print house. It's pretty well-known. They've made some really nice things. Christopher Wool made a print there. I made a mash-up of a landscape pot painting from 2014 and they really liked it—this is probably the print that's most connected to a painting. I think it's a sixteen-color silkscreen. And you know, it was a great process. I made all the vellums in LA and sent them to London. And Carl Freedman does something really cool where he—he's actually going to start printing in-house now, but he used to have all these different silkscreeners in London he worked with to make the prints. The printers we worked with were great. Actually, a couple of vellums got messed up in shipping and they fixed them perfectly. We did everything through the mail, e-mail, and pictures. And the finished product was spectacular. It was the most detailed print, and it had the most color.

JS It's also a great size.

JW Yes, it's about 40 by 30 inches. It's probably among the biggest ones I've made. And it got closer to what you and I had been discussing for a while, which was complicated multi-screened silk-screen prints, because that really connected with my practice.

JS Exactly.

JW So that was great, and we're going to make our second print in the next year.



Jonas Wood signing an edition of the screen print *Landscape Pot with Plant* (2017) in his studio, Culver City, CA, March 2017

JS Most people interested in screen printing know the name Jeff Wasserman.

JW Yes, of course.

JS I know you worked with Jeff.

JW We did work together—it was right at the end, when he was closing down. He actually did an amazing project—I made basketball wallpaper for Miami Art Basel in 2013, and my original idea was to have it all silkscreened and handmade. He made it, but he

used a certain kind of paint that, when we tried to attach it to the wall, the color started leaking out of it.

JS Right. They were meant to go in a frame, not to be adhered to a wall.

JW Somehow, he made enough for me to cover this giant wall in Miami. Later we ended up taking the silkscreens and scanning them to make digital wallpaper.

JS That was actually made to be adhered to a wall.

JW Yes, real wallpaper. So while my first idea was to have silkscreened wallpaper, I love this trompe l'oeil wallpaper. It's digitally printed, but it looks exactly like a silkscreen.

JS Amazing.

JW Later I ended up making tennis ball wallpaper myself from drawings of tennis balls that we scanned. So it's all digitally printed, but the tennis balls looked like drawings and the basketballs looked like silkscreen.

We haven't really talked about it, but you and I started working together three or four years ago, around 2013 or 2014. And in the last couple of years you helped me start my own print house, WKS Editions. We were thinking about setting up a whole silkscreen studio. And then we realized that it's probably best to find people who are excellent at this who we could, not collaborate with, but outsource the work to, and that actually became a much better plan for us. Now we are working with Kevin Giffen and Daniel Wlazlak. Kevin was Jeff's apprentice. In the last year we've been making detailed prints, with about thirty colors, of red Matisse pots. We're re-creating works of mine that already exist, but making hybrid versions with more immediate drawing on top.

JS Well, one of the great things about printmaking is that you can edit. You can add and subtract.

JW Exactly. So it's perfect, because now we've started to work with them, and we can use their studio to make my prints. We didn't have to create a whole setup. The only thing that we had to set up was the etching studio, and I started working with your apprentice Sam Gessow. That was when you and I decided to work together and you became my spiritual and professional printmaking guru.

JS Yes. [Laughs] Exactly.

JW You became my print studio advisor and we



Jonas Wood signing an edition of the screen print *Matisse Pot 2* (2018) with his son Kiki in Wood's studio, Los Angeles, February 2018

started printing just my work, not other artists. And we had Sam working on this *8 Pots* [2017] set for a year. Sam printed those with us and a couple of other prints at the same time, too.

JS Yes, one cutting print and a notepad print.

JW Yes, he made an orchid and a little doodle etching that was more in line with the prints I made with Hamilton. And Sam finished off the year with the *Jungle Kitchen* [2017] etching, which was based on the painting that was in my last show at David Kordansky Gallery in fall 2017. That was everything I've learned with you in one print. When we first started, my inclination was to try to figure out how to make flat planes, and then we ended

up doing this last print with a series of eight to ten aquatint planes, all gray tonalities on top of the hard-ground etching.

JS There's also soft-ground etching there as well, so it's hard ground, soft ground, and aquatint.

JW That's right. Well, that takes us to where we're at right now. We've been talking about making a couple more interiors with this kind of density and then maybe even some landscapes. And we've just started dabbling with color in the small orchid and the doodle, which is new.

JS We need to do some color aquatint as well.

JW Yes. That's the plan. We can't stop.

JS The main thing is that we have a good time.

JW Before 2017, I had never done soft ground before, I had never done aquatinting before. We were only doing hard ground. And there are so many other things that I haven't even learned about yet in printmaking. It just seems like there's a big world ahead of me in printmaking.

There aren't a lot of young people making prints. And I like the idea of establishing that for myself, and also hopefully for other people in the future as time goes on, so I can do the same thing for a young artist that Ruscha did for me. And there are amazing printers in LA, but it's kind of a dying art form.

JS We're another generation.

JW Yeah, another generation. We've got to start some new stuff up.

JS And get people excited. Make it real for younger artists.

JW Exactly.

Jacob Samuel established his imprint Edition Jacob Samuel (EJS) in 1988 and published sixty-five series of prints by sixty artists before drawing the curtain on that endeavor in 2015. Some artists published include Marina Abramović, John Baldessari, Mirosław Bałka, Chris Burden, Dan Graham, Mona Hatoum, Rebecca Horn, Anish Kapoor, Jannis Kounellis, Barry Le Va, Josiah McElheny, Barry McGee, Meredith Monk, Gabriel Orozco, Giuseppe Penone, Ed Ruscha, Tom Sachs, Robert Therrien, Jonas Wood, and Christopher Wool.

A complete archive of EJS publications was jointly acquired in 2010 by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles. A second complete EJS archive was acquired in 2015 by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Jacob Samuel established a new imprint, Green Dolphin Street, in 2016, primarily publishing etchings by Christopher Wool. Also since 2016, he has been actively working with Jonas Wood on prints published by WKS Editions. He is a continuing lecturer in the Art Department at the University of California, Los Angeles.