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The Museum of Modern Art

EXHIBITION MARKS ACQUISITION OF JOAN MIRÓ'S BLACK AND RED SERIES BY THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

MoMA Is the Only American Museum With Complete Set of Prints
Special Web Project Will Show Miró's Working Process
Miró's Black and Red Series: A New Acquisition in Context
November 17, 1998–February 2, 1999

The Museum of Modern Art celebrates a major new print acquisition with the exhibition ***Miró's Black and Red Series: A New Acquisition in Context***, beginning November 17, 1998. The show will feature the eight etchings of Joan Miró's 1938 Black and Red Series as its centerpiece. An additional 150 prints, illustrated books, drawings, posters, photographs, paintings, and sculptures by Miró and his contemporaries will demonstrate how the meaning and significance of one artwork is affected by a variety of interacting forces. These works, organized thematically, will explore Miró's sustained concentration on the technique of etching at this time; the effects of the Surrealist movement on his artistic vision; the social and political impact of the Spanish Civil War; and the development of his personal iconography during this period.

"The Black and Red Series was conceived during a time of turmoil and anxiety for Miró. He was deeply affected by the Spanish Civil War and his feelings are reflected in the frightening imagery and overall impact of the series," says Deborah Wye, Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, who organized the exhibition.

In contrast to the playful, childlike images for which the artist is best known, the series contains a number of disturbing passages. A monstrous face with gaping mouth and long, protruding nose is a menacing presence throughout the series, while the final plate suggests a world turned upside down by political events and personal anguish. Miró's concerns in the late 1930s are also manifested in a poster he designed to support the Republican cause in Spain. In it, he depicts a peasant from his native Catalonia, raising a fist in defiance.

Miró came from a family of craftsmen and inherited a love of materials and a fascination with artistic techniques. The Black and Red Series was produced at a time when he studied etching and drypoint at the Paris print workshop of fellow artist, Louis Marcoussis. Miró made twenty-two prints during this period, all of which will be included in the exhibition. The etching plates used for the Black and Red Series, as well as examples of Miró's etching tools, will also be on display.

The ingenuity that Miró brought to etching in the Black and Red Series is demonstrated on a special project on the Museum's Web site. The subsite (www.moma.org/exhibitions/miro/) shows how the artist began by etching his compositions on two copperplates, which he inked first in red, then in black, finally rotating and superimposing them to create eight distinct variations. Miró's imagery is complex, and printmaking is a mystery to many people, but through computer animation Miró's inventive approach to the medium is clearly revealed. Museum visitors can also view

these demonstrations on special computer kiosks adjacent to the gallery exhibition.

A complimentary booklet including images of all eight etchings in the series, explanatory text, and related illustrations will accompany the exhibition.

Miró's Black and Red Series: A New Acquisition in Context is made possible by a generous grant from CIBC World Markets. The accompanying Web site is supported by Linda and Bill Goldstein. Kiosks made possible through the generosity of The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art and Elo TouchSystems.

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