

# OREGON JEWISH MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Media Release

February 11, 2019

**Exhibition:**

**Mel Bochner - ENOUGH SAID**

**From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation**

**March 7th - May 26, 2019**

Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education

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Featuring editioned and unique works from the last decade by acclaimed American Jewish conceptual artist and painter Mel Bochner highlighting his visual exploration of language's system and meaning

Mel Bochner - ENOUGH SAID From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundations brings together a body of recent works, 2007-2018, that challenge audiences to reflect on the nature and structure of everyday language. Curated by Bruce Guenther, Adjunct Curator for the Special Exhibitions, the exhibition explores language as image and idea through Bochner's long-held interest in complex printmaking techniques.

Bruce Guenther observed, "Bochner's historic use of language and words as both a linguistic system of inquiry and as a formal visual vocabulary of his painting practice has found new focus in the last decade through the artist's intense engagement with printmaking and his exploration of the relationships of words as image, text, voice, and thinking. He plumbs English

and Yiddish for language's power to establish identity, to command respect, or to attack in works of unpredictable emotionality and humor.”

“Mel Bochner is one of the most important conceptual artists of our time! His word art makes us smile, laugh, frown, and jeer – but always forces us to think,” comments Jordan D. Schnitzer. “He seduces us with emotions, words, and phrases that we all have used. Whether we laugh or frown experiencing his art, we are forever moved.”

Born in 1940 to an Orthodox family in Pittsburgh, the artist attended Hebrew School and was exposed to art early through his father, who was a sign painter with his workshop in the family’s basement. Evidencing an early talent for drawing, Bochner participated in the Carnegie Museum of Art’s innovative children’s art classes eventually winning a scholarship to the Carnegie Mellon University.

Bochner came of age during the second half of the 1960s, a moment of radical change both in society at large as well as in art when young artists were looking at ways of breaking with Abstract Expressionism and traditional compositional devices. Mel Bochner was quickly recognized as one of the leading figures in the development of conceptual art in New York in the 1960s and 1970s. His pioneering introduction of the use of language in the visual, led Harvard University art historian Benjamin Buchloh to describe his *Working Drawings* (1966) installation as “probably the first truly conceptual exhibition.”

In discussing his perspective-shifting view of language and meaning, Mel Bochner said, “When I was younger, I was clear about what my work meant. There was one interpretation. Mine. As time went by I began to become interested in the ways it was being misunderstood. Now my feeling is that for the work to continue to be relevant, it must be continually re-misunderstood.”

While painting slowly lost its preeminent position in modern art, language moved from talking about art to becoming part of art itself in large measure due to Bochner’s consistent probing of the conventions of both painting and of language. His work investigates the way we use words, construct and understand them. His work in painting and printmaking underlines the way

words relate to one another and make us more attentive to the unspoken codes that underpin our engagement with the world.

In reflecting on the exhibition, OJMCHÉ Director Judy Margles said, “ENOUGH SAID allows visitors to OJMCHÉ to look closely at a seminal body of work by one of the most influential and original living American Jewish artists. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation. Jordan Schnitzer uniquely shares his passion for art, and in particular prints, by making his collection available to smaller institutions and supporting outreach to students and younger audience members—which makes this opportunity truly special.”

### **About the Jordan D. Schnitzer Family Foundation**

At age 14, Jordan D. Schnitzer bought his first work of art from his mother’s contemporary art gallery in Portland, evolving into a lifelong avocation as collector. He began collecting contemporary prints and multiples in earnest in 1988. Today, the Schnitzer collection exceeds 13,000 works and includes many of today’s most important contemporary artists. It has grown to be one of the country’s largest private print collections. He generously lends work from his collection to qualified institutions. The Foundation has organized over 110 exhibitions and has had art exhibited at over 150 museums. Mr. Schnitzer is also President of Harsch Investment Properties, a privately owned real estate investment company based in Portland, Oregon, owning and managing office, multi-tenant industrial, multi-family and retail properties in six western states. For more information about the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, please visit [jordanschnitzer.org](http://jordanschnitzer.org).

### **About Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education**

The Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education explores the legacy of the Jewish experience in Oregon and teaches the universal lessons of the Holocaust. Through exhibitions, programs, educational resources, and opportunities for intercultural conversation, OJMCHÉ challenges visitors to resist indifference and discrimination and to envision a just and inclusive world.

OJMCHÉ features, along with its core exhibitions, national and international temporary exhibitions that showcase Jewish contributions to world culture and ideas, issues of Jewish identity, and the forces of prejudice. OJMCHÉ also

offers wide range of programs for all ages, including films, lectures, and concerts that cover a wide range of topics relating to Jewish art, culture, and heritage, which stimulate dialogue about identity, culture, and assimilation. Education programs embrace the Jewish experience and explore the lessons of the Holocaust. The organization is the steward of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial, located in Washington Park, and of the Archives and Artifact Collection documenting the Oregon Jewish experience. Tours of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial are free and available by appointment. For more information, visit [www.ojmche.org](http://www.ojmche.org).