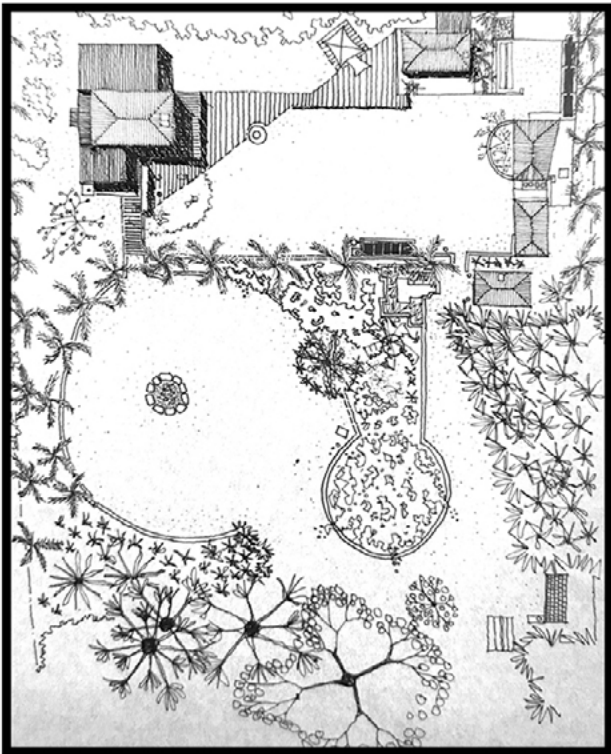


**BRICE  
MARDEN  
JULIAN  
SCHNABEL**

**AT  
THE CAMP  
St BARTH**

22 Décembre 2023  
28 Février 2024



Musée Territorial du Wall House  
La Pointe, Gustavia



Brice **MARDEN**, Julian **SCHNABEL**  
at **THE CAMP**

St Barth



Catalogue of the exhibition held at the Wall House Museum  
Saint Barthélemy

December 22, 2023 - February 28, 2024

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This exhibition was curated with the assistance of Bill Katz

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## Introduction

It all began with a Picasso – the self portrait *Yo Picasso*, 1901 – which was acquired by the poet and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal and given by his daughter Christiane to her son Michael Zimmer as a wedding present.

With the proceeds of the sale of the Picasso, Michael purchased a piece of land on the Baie de St. Jean in St. Barth in 1970 where he created The Camp, an open-air lifestyle experiment that became a magnet for island residents and visitors and which was a fun and light hearted cultural exchange.

The artists Julian Schnabel, Brice and Helen Marden, and Jean-Michel Basquiat resided there and created work on The Camp's sandy ground. Elaine de Kooning, Ellsworth Kelly, Walter de Maria, Jasper Johns, and Craig Clairborne were also guests and many of Michael's friends joined him in living at The Camp until the early 1990's when Michael sold The Camp and transitioned to living on the island of Grand Manan, Canada.

This exhibition of the work of Brice Marden and Julian Schnabel is accompanied by never-before-seen photographs and archival material from The Camp and opens a window into a past when everything seemed simpler, quieter, and slower.

1) Michael Zimmer





Hugo von Hofmannsthal



Heinrich Zimmer



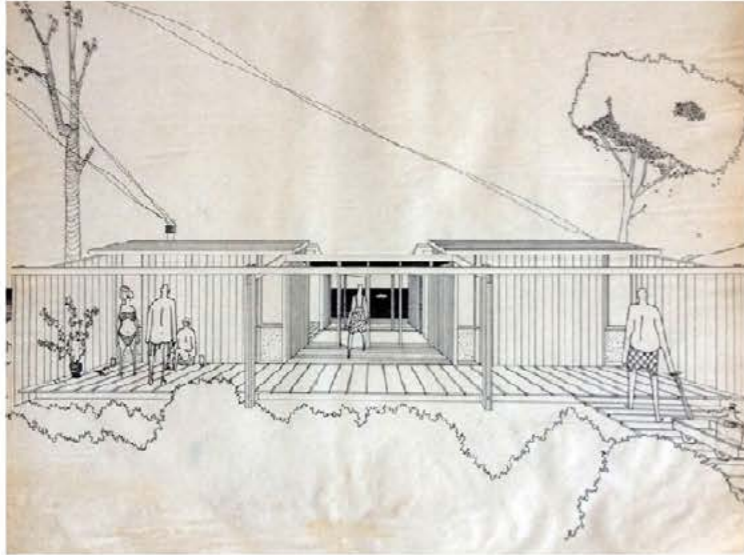
Michael Zimmer

## Early Years

Michael was born in Heidelberg in 1934, the youngest son of Sanskrit scholar and Indologist Heinrich Zimmer and his wife Christiane, daughter of the Austrian poet and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal ( “Der Rosenkavalier”, “Elektra”). The family fled Nazi Germany in 1939, and New York’s Columbia University offered a hospitable teaching environment.

After her husband’s premature death in 1943, Christiane settled in New York’s West Village where her house became a gathering place for luminaries from both sides of the Atlantic, among them Hannah Arendt, Wyston Auden and Joseph Campbell, one of Zimmer’s most illustrious disciples.

Michael, however, was drawn to architecture and design. Aided by a generous stipend from the Mellon family (early admirers of his father’s work on the myths of India), he studied at Harvard University. After graduation, he briefly shared an office at 295 Madison Ave with his friends Richard Kaplan and James Stewart Polshek.



Summer House  
designed by Michael Zimmer  
on Fire Island, NY



Always fascinated by the built environment, Michael chose to major in architecture, studying with masters such as Walter Gropius and Siegfried Giedion. A short-lived career as an architect in New York followed: Michael, by his own admission, wasn't cut out for the compromises it entailed.

After his marriage to Emily Sophia Harding, a cousin by marriage and daughter of Alice Astor, the couple briefly occupied the glamour pages of *Vogue* and other glossies. In 1967 they had a son, Jacob and soon after left New York to live "off the grid".



## The Camp

When Michael and his wife Emily first came to St. Barts in 1968, New York life appeared to pale by comparison. St. Barts offered a chance for new beginnings, and from now on the city became Michael's go-to place for supplies to make Le Camp happen and keep it thriving: pop tents and camping gear, books and music tapes, Whole Earth catalogues and solar cells found their way from Manhattan to St. Barts. During the summers, his mother's house in the city and later the loft on Greene Street which he and I shared, beginning in 1978 served as fueling stations for his restless energy.

Over the years it became clearer and clearer that it was not New York where he could realize his dreams of design for survival. St. Barts and Le Camp offered what he was looking for: a life in harmony with nature, and a light footprint on this earth.

So the story of The Camp started with a Picasso - to be precise: with the Picasso self portrait *Yo Picasso*, 1901.

The poet and librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal acquired this painting for his collection in 1912. Some fifty years later, it was a wedding present from the poet's daughter Christiane to her son, Michael Zimmer.

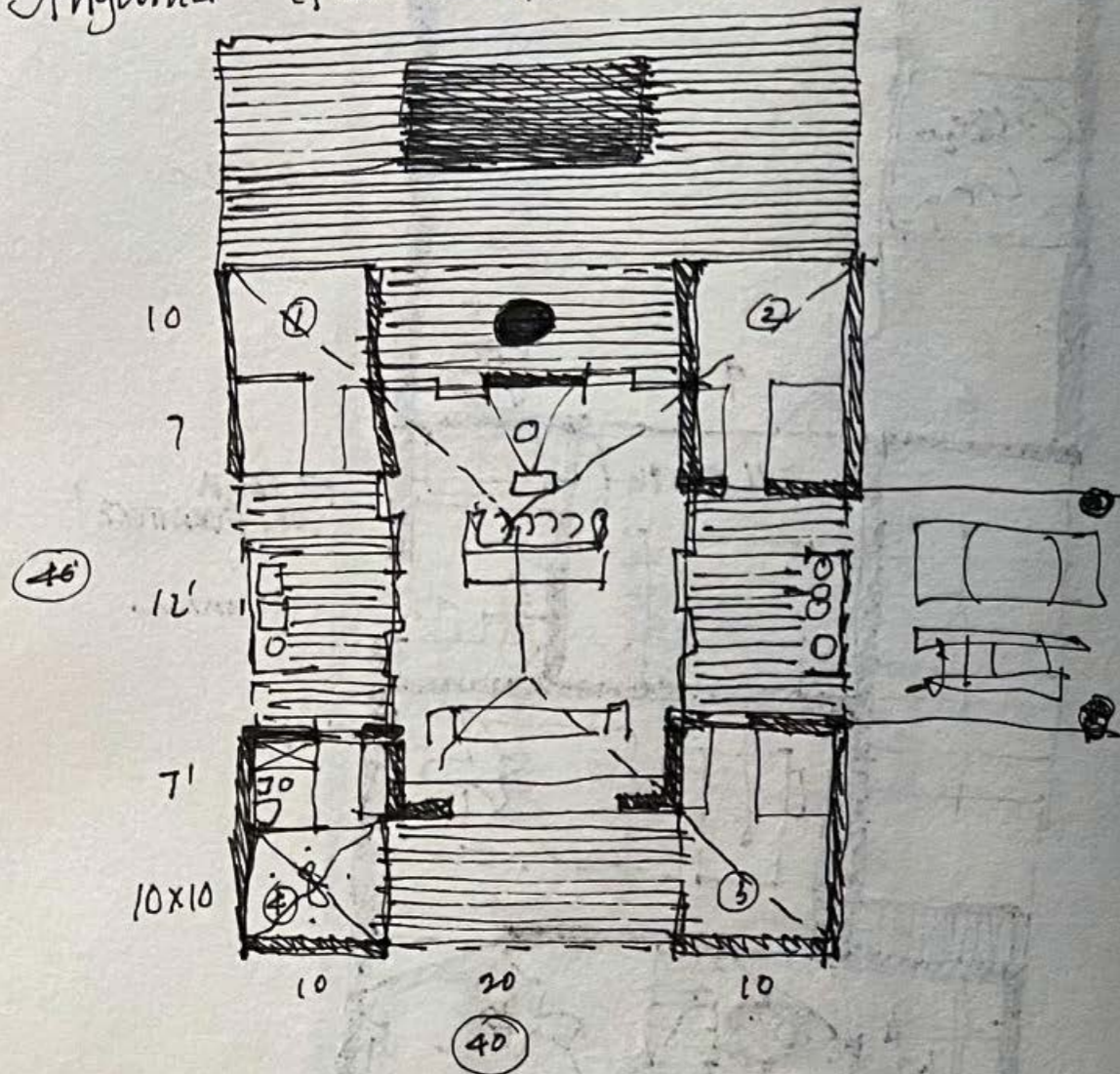
Zimmer and his wife Emily sold the Picasso portrait in the 1960s at auction, where it fetched about 300,000 dollars. A nice sum in those days, and a good base for Zimmer's subsequent hippie life style which he demonstrated to an ever growing audience on the Baie de St Jean in St. Barts.

Michael and Emily "discovered" St. Barts like many tourists - on a day trip from St. Martin in 1968. But unlike those other sightseers, they stayed in St. Barts, buying the half-acre of land in St. Jean from Henri Greaux for \$20,000. A huge sum in those days and cause for much merriment and laughter from the St. Barts people who thought that living on their mosquito-infested beaches was sheer folly. In spite of the bugs, Le Camp proved to be a refuge for Michael who, after his divorce from Emily, continued to live on site, inviting friends such as Bill Barrell, Vera Graaf, Joan Schade and others to share the little oasis.



1969 photos of the land Michael Zimmer bought in St Jean

Giovino House  
Anguilla (from Evans/Schreibler/D'Urso FIP)



make it even more walled in  
see ancient roman house.



Le Camp soon turned into a laboratory for whimsical survival ideas.

A big driver of these was the *Whole Earth Catalog*, Americas hippie-bible which advertised and explained in great detail how to make things from scratch and how to survive on modest means in a rich consumer society such as the United States.

Then there was Michael's ingenious friend, the British painter Bill Barrell whom he initially invited to share the camp. Bill's whimsical objects, useful and beautiful at the same time, put smiles on the face of all who visited.

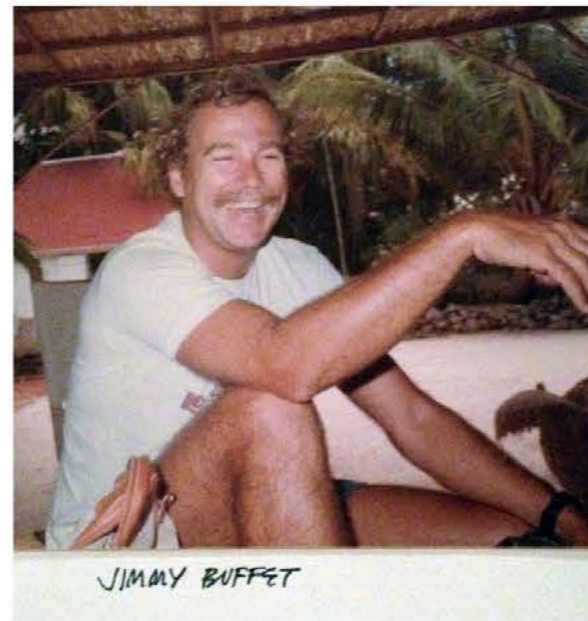
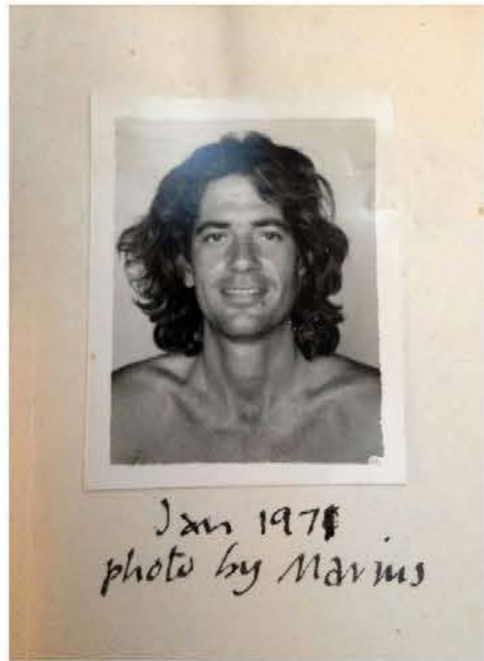
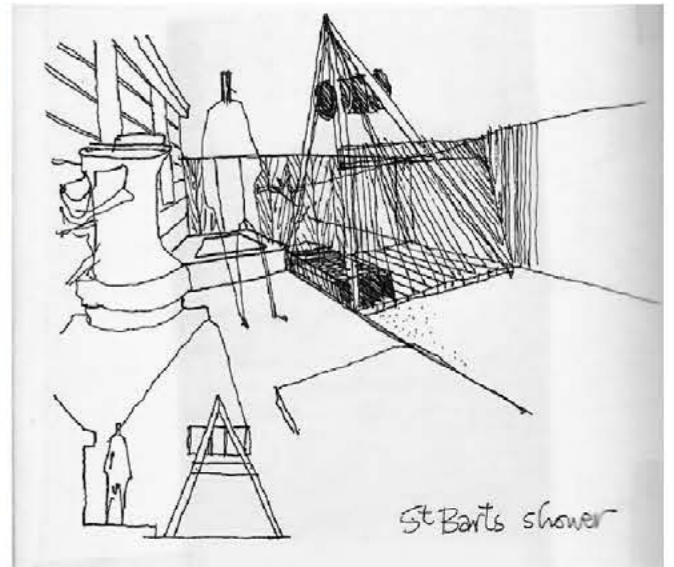
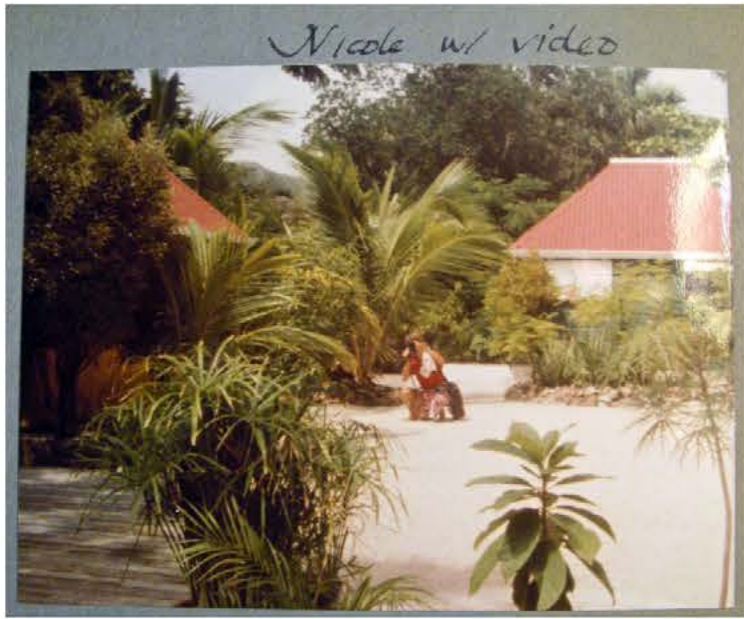
There was a hand-crafted picnic table w board games scratched into its surface. Small holes in the table indicated that a cigarette butt might be discarded here, where it fell into a tin can, ingeniously hidden underneath.

While Michael was clearly the architect and designer, Bill's ingenuity ran more to the domestic. He made the camp mailbox out of a large tin can, created an oven for baking bread out of virtually nothing and came up with some funny, useful, handmade thing just about every day.

Inspired, Michael followed suit. Sitting at the open-air kitchen table table, he filled countless black sketchbooks with new ideas - for a clever "siege a la Turque" toilet, surrounded by palm fronds, for stone walls or tiny wooden houses, inspired by the sparse, boat-builder aesthetic of the St.Barts buildings. There was a solar fountain, much admired by all that had a ping pong ball dancing on a rising column of water. The area around the camp pool table was paved - beautifully by Michael - with upended Guinness bottles which created a lovely footfriendly surface for this band of eternally barefoot campers. If you accidentally broke one of the bottles, no problem - replacements were easy to come by.

Not all of Michael's ideas were a success. The underground dining table, where you ate at ground level, but had to lower yourself into a trench dug into the sand, was soon abandoned as too moist, too deep and ultimately as too creepy. Compared to today's standards, the little crew at the Camp lived very frugally: for many years there was no electricity, and light had to be generated with candles, lanterns, Coleman camping lights or kerosene lamps.

In the late 70s, Zimmer installed solar energy. The solar cells, parked on the roof of the the so-called "Big House", drew visitors from all over the island, as did the open-air waterbed which was - due to the heat - a pretty short-lived attraction.



Pretty much from the beginning, Le Camp was a magnet for some of the young islanders, St. Barts and Metros alike. They turned up to share food, to exchange ideas, to smoke dope, or to trade books - hungry for new ideas and inspiration. And it worked both ways: young St. Barts such as Loulou Magras, Vianney Stakelborough and others explained the island ways to the curious Yanks.

It was a fun and light-hearted cultural exchange in a time before climate change, billionaire yachts and beach discos.

Le Camp slowly faded, when all these things began to arrive and to take hold.

In the early 90's, Zimmer and his then wife, Veronique Sari, decided to sell the place and Zimmer looked for another place to realize his visions.

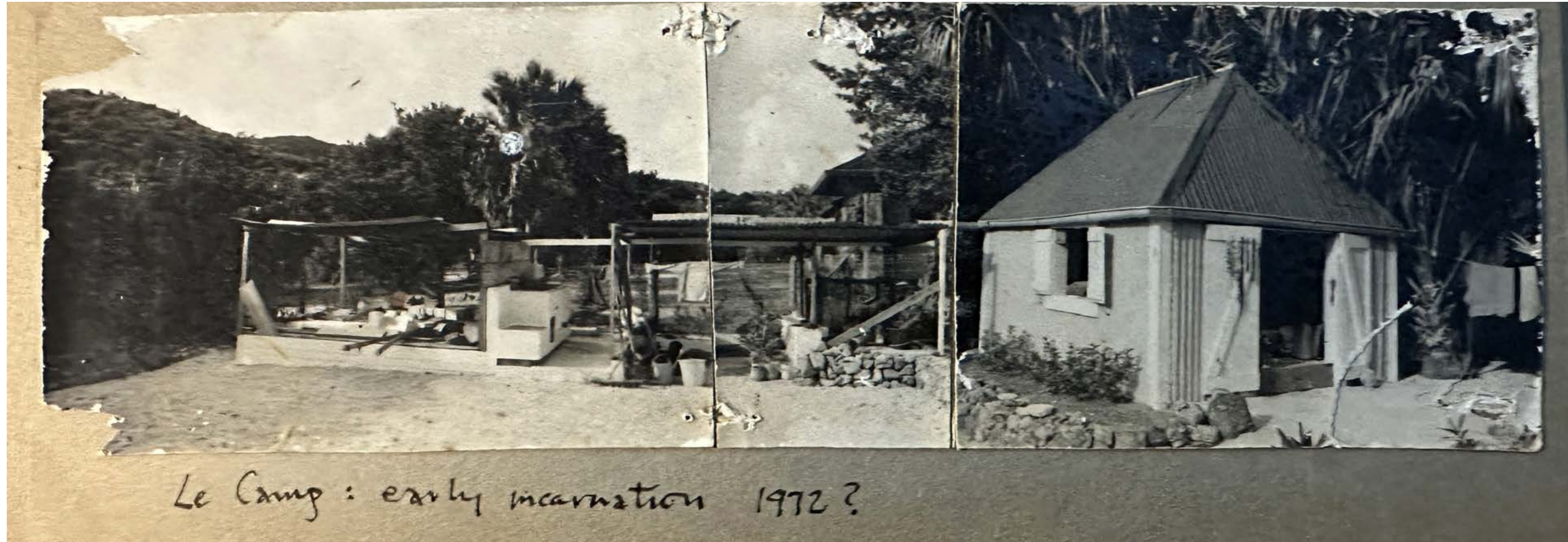
After selling the Camp in the 90's Michael went out to look for another project.

He bought a townhouse in Harlem which he made the most excentric abode possible but it was his last venture that enabled him to leave a real monument behind him: the famous Sardine Museum and Herring Hall of Fame. A congregation of old smokehouses on the island of Grand Manan in Canada.

To buy it he sold his Gustav Klimt...

But that is another story.

Vera Graaf



2) Brice Marden



American born Brice Marden (1938 – 2023) developed a unique practice drawn from his personal experiences and global travels where nature became the foundation of his inspiration.

In the late 1960's he began to receive international recognition as a master of the monochrome panel. Visiting an exhibition dedicated to the masters of calligraphy in 1984, he was deeply marked by the economy and vitality of the Chinese art of writing. While in St Barth he started a series of works on paper drawing on this influence. His practice deeply informed by his knowledge of classical architecture, world religion, ancient history, and Asian spirituality was shaped by the landscape that surrounded him while he worked.

In 1991 Brice Marden explained: "These are not pictures of specific places or things. There is an interest in landscape and some of the drawings have been started in front of landscape. Later I work on them in the studio. There's a palm grove that I worked in, in St. Barts. The St. Barts drawings were started there."

In the 1990's Brice Marden and his wife Helen, a painter in her own right, bought a dilapidated historical property in Nevis and turned it into the Golden Rock Inn, thus consolidating their attachment to the Caribbean.

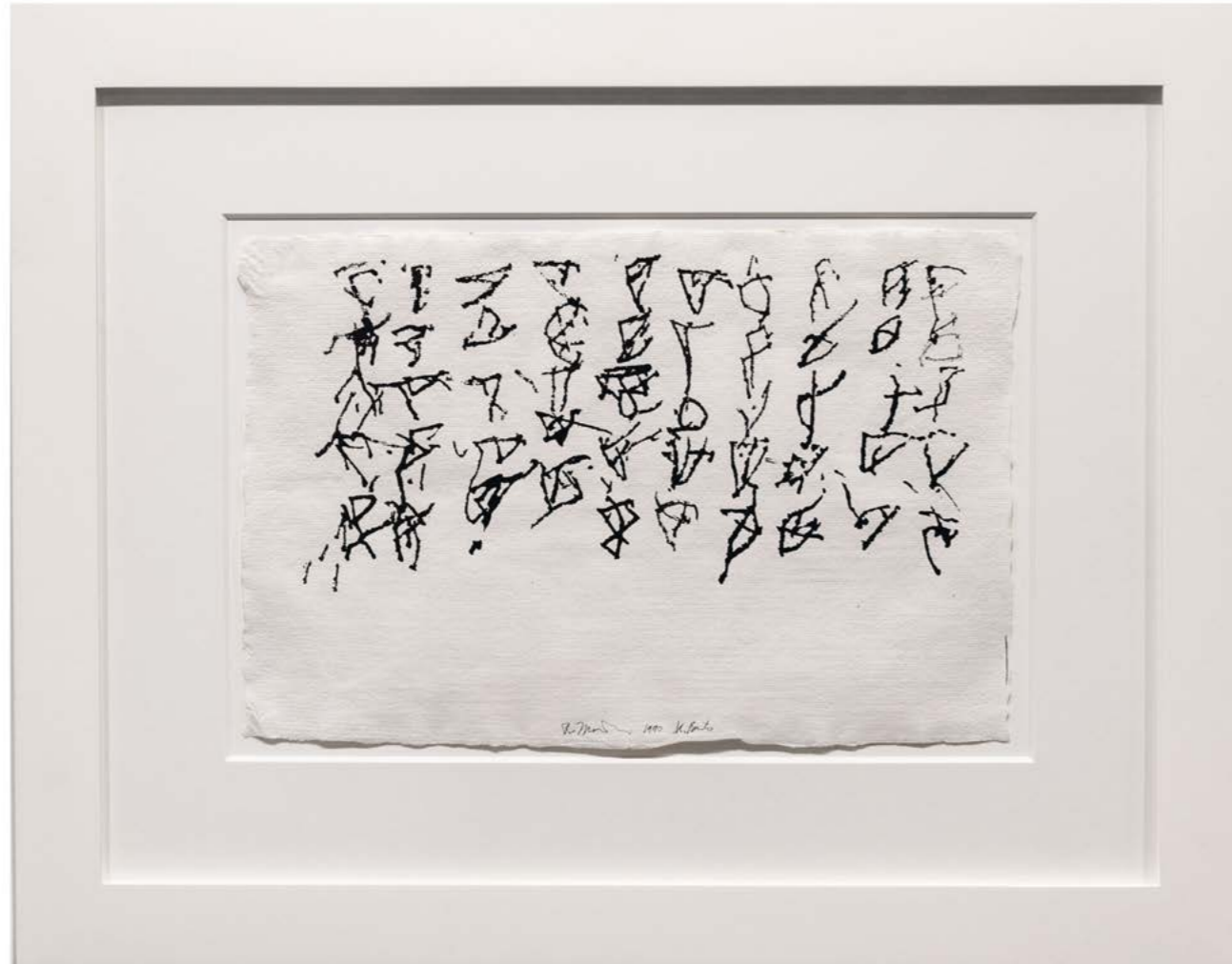
Brice Marden has had major retrospectives including at :  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, Dallas Museum of Art, TX, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Tate Gallery, London, England, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France.



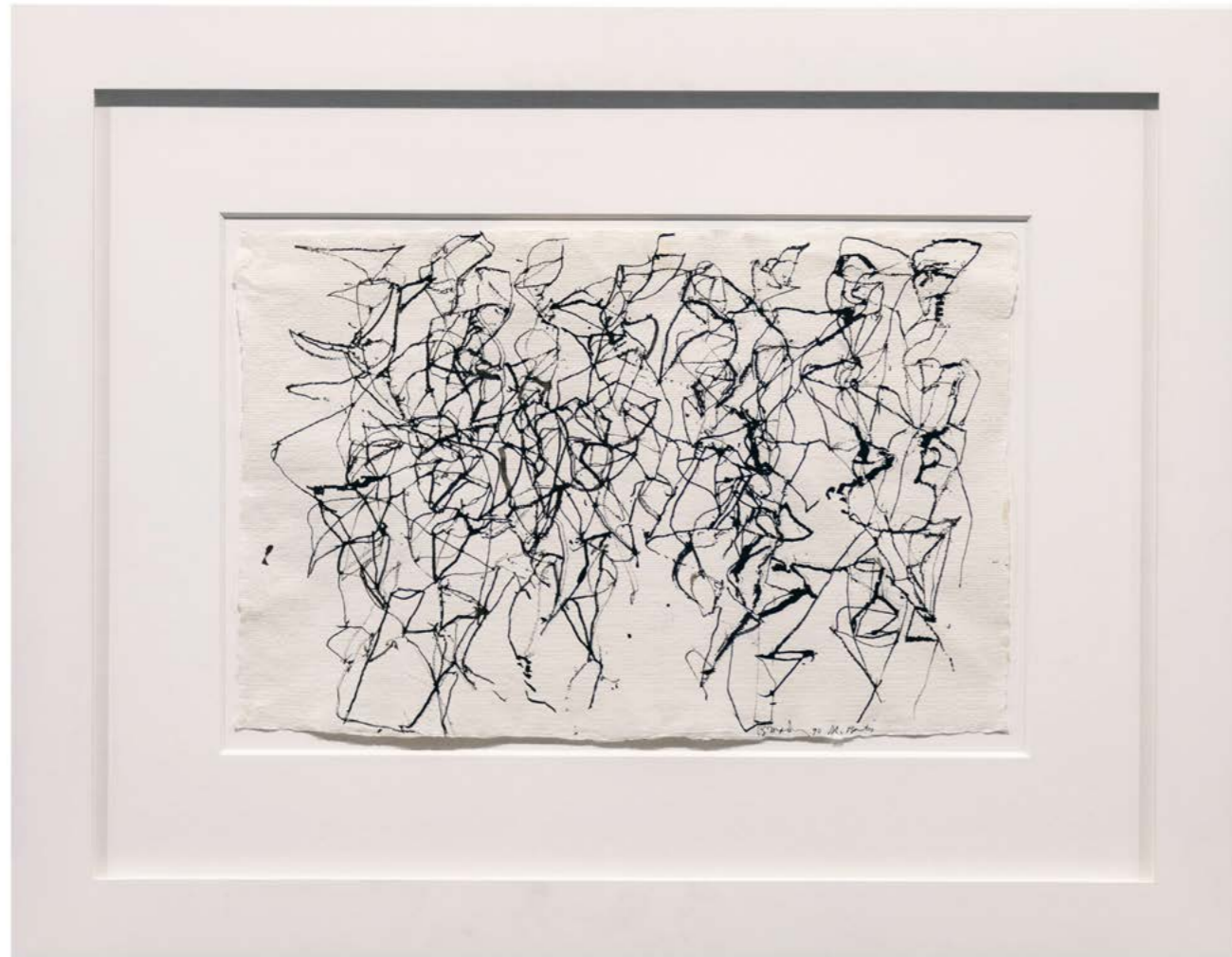
Brice Marden  
St Bart's #7, 1986  
Ink on handmade paper  
Courtesy of the artist's estate



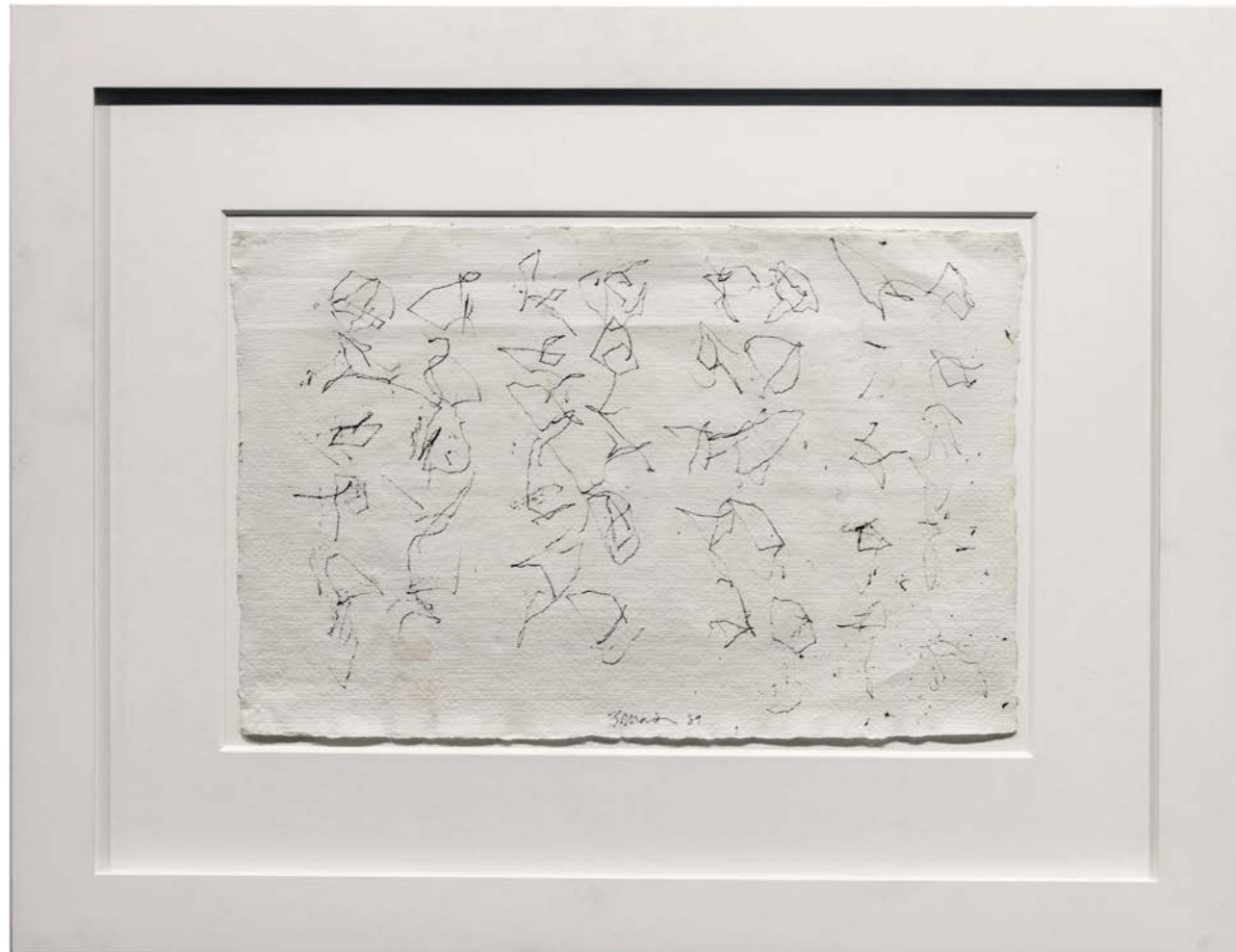
Brice Marden  
St Bart's #1, 1990  
Ink on handmade paper  
Courtesy of the artist's estate



Brice Marden  
St Bart's #6, 1990  
Ink on handmade paper  
Courtesy of the artist's estate



Brice Marden  
St Bart's #8, 1989  
Ink on handmade paper  
Courtesy of the artist's estate



Brice Marden  
St Bart's #8, 1986  
Ink on handmade paper  
Courtesy of the artist's estate



3) Julian Schnabel



American born in 1951, Julian Schnabel works as a painter, sculptor and filmmaker. He became first known for his plate paintings, painted shards of broken plates in three dimensional surfaces. Further exploring various materials and techniques, he continued his practice to create deep, visceral works.

A master of experiment, Schnabel has also turned his eye to making movies for which he received much acclaim. His films include *Basquiat* (1996), *Before Night Falls* (2000), *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007) and *At Eternity's Gate* (2018).

He and his family have a deep connection to St Barth, beginning with their time at the Camp and continuing until today.

The work of Julian Schnabel has been exhibited in numerous museums including Kunsthalle, Basel, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Tate Gallery, London, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Museo Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, and le Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
1982  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist







Julian Schnabel  
From the names of our children #2  
1980  
Collage on found map  
Courtesy of the artist

Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
2012  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist





Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
2015  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist

Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
2012  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist



Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
2012  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist





Julian Schnabel  
Untitled  
2015  
Oil on found map  
Courtesy of the artist

## The Camp

A long time ago when I was first married to Jacqueline Beurang, we went down to St. Barths and stayed on the beach at Saint-Jean, an idyllic paradise. There was surf on the island and the camp belonged to an architect named Michael Zimmer and his wife Vera. There was a little village on the beach, the kind of thing you'd see in Robinson Crusoe. It reminded me of the places I stayed in in Mexico, somewhere out of the fray, a place right out of *Islands in the Stream* by Hemmingway, a place where you could be near the water and paint outside.

There was a society there at the time, a group of New Yorkers or some other people who came down there. It was an island that's right of St. Martin and I was 30 or so at the time. I did know Ellsworth Kelly and Jasper Johns who stayed to St. Martin. St. Barths was a little place that had a sketchy airport where you had to dive in between the hills to land. It was hard to get water there, so I imagined building a well on top of cliffs where water would drain into it like a cowcatcher off of the mountain when it came down.

I thought I could build something with columns around it and I could paint outside on the side of this cliff on top of that beach. I never did.

It got very popular after that and I think I only really went back once some years later with Jamie Nares and her family. It was nothing like what it was before. It got a little too fancy for me, like Saint-Tropez. But when I was there the last time many years later I saw Cy Twombly when he was visiting with Larry Gagosian. It was very nice that I got to see Cy.

So I haven't spent a lot of time there. Mexico is more my local habitat. I've been going there since I was a teenager. But at that moment when I was at Saint-Jean, at that camp, at that place, I thought it was very accommodating and very beautiful. Michael and Vera made a nice environment where I made some drawings.

So I liked the idea of showing some works on paper at this place that I had a nice feeling about from such a long time ago. And it's a gift to show with Brice and Jean-Michel and Helen and Bill Katz made it very easy to do. It's a familiar type thing.

I hope that people have some satisfaction out of seeing these works.

Julian Schnabel





