

Michael Armitage *Crucible*

May 8–June 27, 2025
533 West 19th Street, New York



Michael Armitage, *The Trial*, 2024
© Michael Armitage. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner

David Zwirner is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Kenyan British artist Michael Armitage, which inaugurates the gallery's new Chelsea building at 533 West 19th Street. This is Armitage's first solo show with David Zwirner since the announcement of his representation in 2022 and his first solo presentation in New York since *Projects 110: Michael Armitage*, organized by The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, and held at The Museum of Modern Art in 2019. The exhibition includes new paintings and bronze reliefs by the artist.

In *Crucible*, Armitage reflects on the theme of migration. Painted on Lubugo bark cloth—a traditional Ugandan textile used in funerary rituals, which the artist has used as a support for more than a decade—these works are marked by a visceral directness that implicates the viewer in the migrant's journey and the representation of migrants in wider society. The works in the exhibition incorporate elements of real-life imagery to present narratives that are imbued with a profound sense of humanity and pathos.

While some of the paintings evoke vignettes from a migration route that traverses the Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe, other works consider aspects of migration in a broader sense.

Michael Armitage was born in Nairobi in 1984. He received his BFA from Slade School of Art, London, in 2007, and a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Academy Schools, London, in 2010. The artist was the recipient of the Ruth Baumgarte Art Award in 2020, and in 2021, he was elected a Royal Academician of Painting by the Royal Academy of Art, London.

The artist's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide. In 2023, *Michael Armitage: Pathos and the Twilight of the Idle*, a solo presentation of the artist's work, was on view at Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria. *Michael Armitage: You, Who Are Still Alive*, was on view at Kunsthalle Basel in 2022. In the same year, a solo presentation of the artist's work curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist was on view at Calcografía Nacional, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid. In 2021, *Michael Armitage: Account of an Illiterate Man* was presented by Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. The solo exhibition *Michael Armitage: Paradise Edict* debuted in 2020 at Haus der Kunst, Munich, and traveled to the Royal Academy of Arts, London, in 2021.

Other monographic exhibitions have taken place at prominent venues internationally, such as the Norval Foundation, Cape Town (2020); Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2019); The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in collaboration with The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2019); South London Gallery (2017); Turner Contemporary, Margate, England (2017); and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, California (2016).

Work by Armitage has also been featured in significant group exhibitions. In 2024, Armitage was included in *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure*, a traveling group presentation, which originated at the National Portrait Gallery, London, then traveled to The Box, Plymouth, England, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, through 2025. Works by the artist were included in *Drawing in the Continuous Present*, a 2022 group exhibition at The Drawing Center, New York. Armitage's work was included in the 2021 group exhibition *British Art Show 9*, organized by Hayward Gallery Touring, London, which traveled to numerous venues in the United Kingdom through 2022. In 2019, the artist participated in the 58th Venice Biennale.

In 2020, Armitage founded the Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute (NCAI) to promote art by practitioners in East Africa. The groundbreaking nonprofit arts venue hosts exhibitions, curatorial research residencies, libraries, and archives, as well as other educational initiatives that enrich the

discourse on contemporary creative practices in the region. In the future, NCAI has plans to develop a postgraduate fine arts program, among other wide-reaching resources.

NCAI also collaborates with writers and artists from East Africa to publish original commissioned essays, interviews, articles, and reports. NCAI's robust publications and artists books offer insight, research, and thought leadership that underscores its commitment to documentation of the artists' creativity. David Zwirner Books proudly supports and distributes the NCAI titles *Mwili*, *Akili Na Roho/Body, Mind, and Spirit* and *I Hope So: Sane Wadu* internationally.

Armitage's works are represented in distinguished institutional collections worldwide, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Institute of Chicago; Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, California; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Dallas Museum of Art; Fondation Beyeler, Basel/Riehen, Switzerland; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Government Art Collection, London; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker, Norway; Kunstmuseum Basel; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, Netherlands; Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; National Gallery of Australia, Parkes; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Portrait Gallery, London; Norval Foundation Collection, Cape Town; Pinault Collection, Paris; The Roberts Institute of Art, London; Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, United Kingdom; Victor Pinchuk Contemporary Art Foundation, Kyiv; and Yuz Foundation Collection, Shanghai.

Armitage has been represented by David Zwirner since 2022. He lives and works in Indonesia and Nairobi.

For all press inquiries, contact:

Erin Pinover
epinover@davidzwirner.com

Julia Lukacher
jlukacher@davidzwirner.com