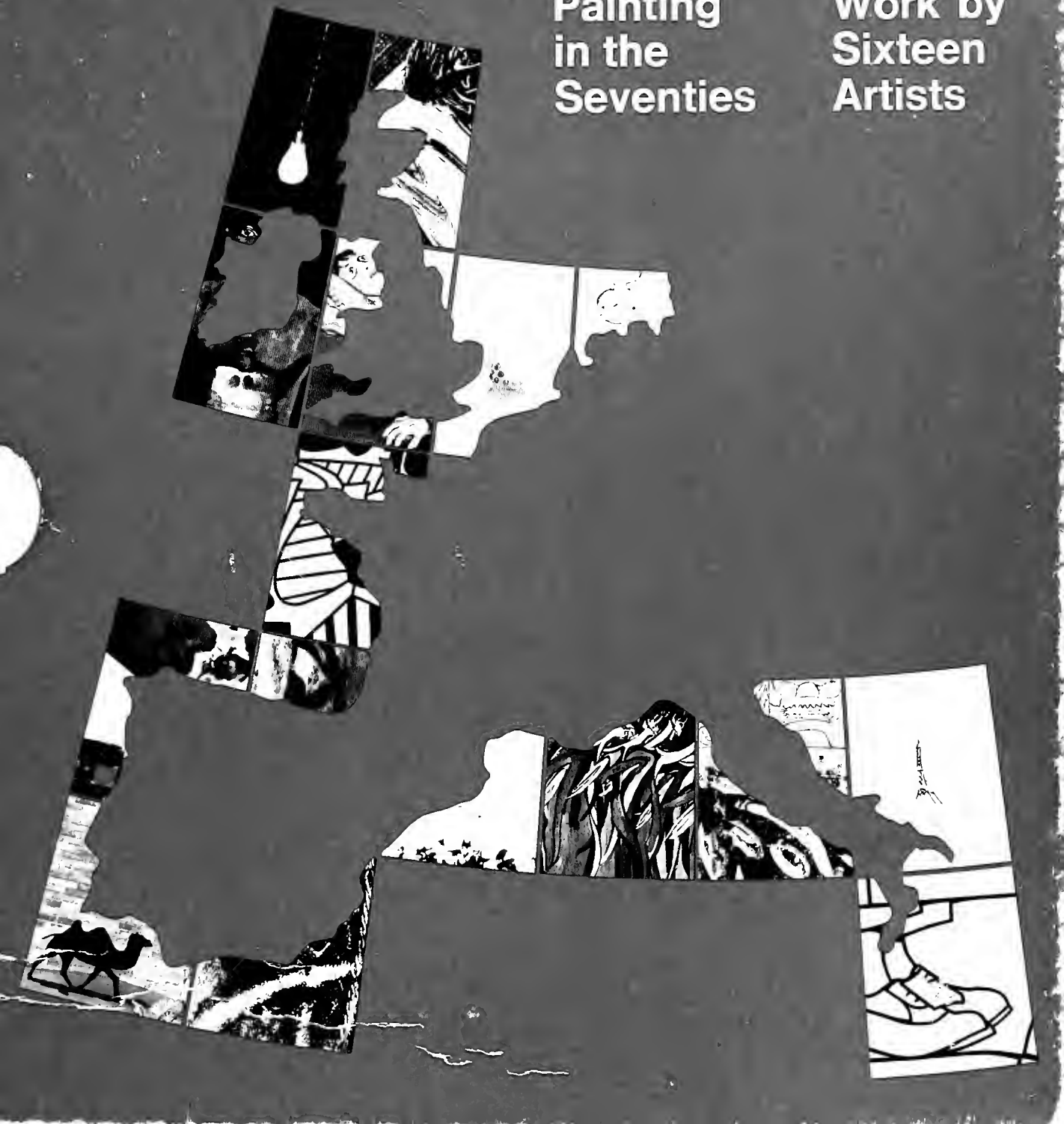
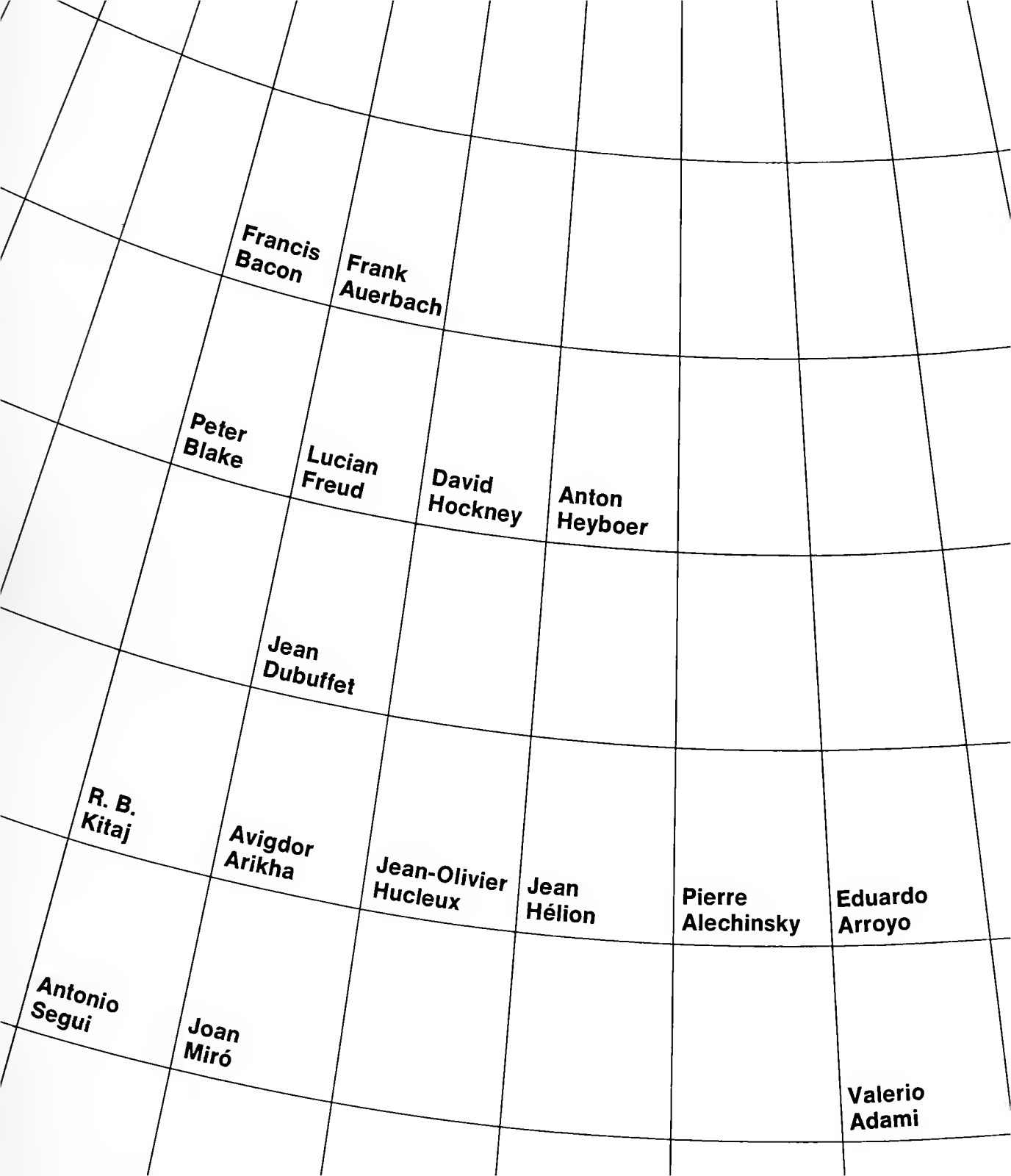
European Painting in the Seventies

New Work by Sixteen Artists




Francis Bacon
Frank Auerbach
Peter Blake
Lucian Freud
David Hockney
Anton Heyboer
Jean Dubuffet
R. B. Kitaj
Avigdor Arikha
Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Jean Hélion
Pierre Alechinsky
Eduardo Arroyo
Antonio Segui
Joan Miró
Valerio Adami

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
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Introduction by
Maurice Tuchman
with statements
by the artists

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Acknowledgments

First of all I wish to express my real gratitude to all sixteen artists participating in this exhibition; obviously, it is their art that makes the exhibition possible, but their individual cooperation was exceptionally generous and supportive.

My longtime associate, Jane Livingston — formerly Curator of Modern Art at this Museum, presently Chief Curator at the Corcoran Gallery — is the first colleague I must thank for her interesting thoughts about this show. Pontus Hultén, Director of Visual Arts of the Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, Paris, Germain Viatte, and Dominique Bozo, of the same institution, gave freely of their knowledge of the French situation. Michael Compton, Keeper of Exhibitions and Education, the Tate Gallery, London, advised me about painting in Great Britain; and David Sylvester in London assisted me in regard to Francis Bacon and generously granted permission for the use of quotations. In Holland, my learning of the art scene was facilitated by Edward de Wilde, Director, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Jurgen Harten, Director, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, provided information about German developments. Thomas M. Messer, Director, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, was most helpful in reviewing the European painting situation; and Henry Geldzahler, Curator of Twentieth Century Art, the Metropolitan Museum, kindly offered his thoughts as well.

The artists' representatives were in every instance completely responsive to the many requests we made of them. My gratitude is hereby expressed to the following: Eva Bendien, Galerie Espace, Amsterdam, for Anton Heyboer; Karl Flinker, Paris, for Jean Hélion and Eduardo Arroyo; Arnold Glimcher of Pace Gallery, New York, and Ernst Beyeler, Beyeler Galerie, Basel, for Jean Dubuffet; James Kirkman and Anthony d'Offay for Lucian Freud; Kasmin in London for David Hockney, and Bob Miller of the Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, Nicholas Wilder, Los Angeles, and Gemini, G.E.L., Los Angeles, for this artist also; John Lefebre, Lefebre Gallery, New York, for assistance with Pierre Alechinsky and Antonio Segui; Daniel Lelong of Galerie Maeght, Paris and Zurich, for Valerio Adami and for Joan Miró; Pierre Matisse, New York, also for Miró; Frank Lloyd, Pierre Levai, and Valerie Beston of Marlborough Galleries, New York and London, for Avigdor Arikha, Frank Auerbach, Francis Bacon, and R. B. Kitaj; and Leslie Waddington, Waddington Galleries, London, for Peter Blake. Each of these art dealers, as well as other dealers whose artists are not in this particular exhibition, rendered many courtesies and considerate actions, such as arranging studio visits, providing documentation, and facilitating transportation.

In the course of developing the exhibition, certain discussions with friends and associates in the art world were particularly fruitful: let me thank Richard Diebenkorn, Baroness Minda de Gunzburg, Newton Harrison, Jasper Johns, Sven Lukin, Ronald Mallory, Peter Plagens, Barbara Rose, Danièle Thompson, and Tim Vreeland for their warm concern and critical thoughts. Three of the artists in the exhibition offered me stimulating ideas: Avigdor Arikha, R. B. Kitaj, and David Hockney.

An unusually large number of individuals have helped make this exhibition possible. Virtually all of the Museum's 200 employees played some role in organizing it, as is customary, but I wish to thank the following for their highly visible contributions: Kenneth Donahue, Director, for supporting this project throughout its vicissitudes over a period of eighteen months; Betty Asher, Cecil Fergerson, and Barbara McQuaide of the Department of Modern Art; a summer intern, Katherine Klapper, who worked with real dedication; Grace Spencer, a department volunteer of longstanding commitment; Stella Dubow, another Museum volunteer, who made valuable contributions in translating from French material by Jean Hélion, Joan Miró, and Pierre Alechinsky (additional assistance on the Alechinsky article was provided by Ellen La Spalluto of the U. S. Department of State and translations of Dutch material were contributed by Gaby Stuart); and Patricia Nauert, Registrar, and Kristen McCormick, Assistant Registrar, for their efficient arrangement for scores of loans from diverse European and American locations. Edward Cornachio, Head, Photography Department, and his fine staff, and Eleanor Hartman, Museum Librarian, with Terry Ferl, Librarian, all displayed resourcefulness. In the Department of Exhibitions and Publications, I enjoyed the cooperation of Jeanne D'Andrea, Coordinator of Exhibitions and Publications, Head Graphic Designer Evelyn Hirsch, Publications Associate Nancy Grubb, and Exhibitions Associate Carl Vance. The exhibition was installed by George Hernandez, Sylvester Wilcey, James Kenion, James W. Allen, Paul J. Martin, and their staffs, working under James Peoples, Head of Museum Operations. Philippa Calnan, Public Information Director, performed with her usual effectiveness as well as presenting me with her reasoned reactions to various matters.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Museum's Modern and Contemporary Art Council, whose president, Dorothy Blankfort, has been completely supportive. Finally, I am grateful to the Board of Trustees, Exhibitions Committee Chairman Sidney F. Brody, Trustee Michael Blankfort, and Board President Richard E. Sherwood for their firm and constant backing of this exhibition and catalog.

Introduction

This is how the exhibition came about and why it looks the way it does. In March 1974, I proposed to organize an exhibition of "painting in the seventies," declaring that painting was "flourishing and that its current stylistic pluralism differentiates the state of the art today from previous modern decades, which had at any one point a single overriding impulse (e.g., Cubism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, sixties dispassionate hard-edge art)." With Jane Livingston, then Curator of Modern Art at the Museum, I drew up a list of fifty-one artists, forty of whom had not been shown in commercial galleries or museums in Southern California for at least five years. Artists on that list included Arakawa, Francis Bacon, Jo Baer, Balthus, Chuck Close, Gene Davis, Willem De Kooning, Jim Dine, Oyvind Fahlstrom, Lorser Feitelson, Helen Frankenthaler, Nancy Graves, Richard Hamilton, Al Held, David Hockney, Al Jensen, R. B. Kitaj, Robert Mangold, Joan Mitchell, Robert Motherwell, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jules Olitski, Nathan Oliveira, Philip Pearlstein, Joseph Raffael, Gerhard Richter, Paul Sarkesian, Cy Twombly, and William T. Wiley. The need for exhibiting such an array of talent was clear and compelling, and the Museum's Board of Trustees approved the exhibition plan as proposed, with recognition that a group exhibition is subject to change: somewhat like a living organism, it would be nurtured by supporting forces over a period of time. Such support came in different ways: when Richard Diebenkorn and I were in his studio discussing his new paintings, he said, with a distinct and unusual sense of satisfaction before one canvas of his, "Well, I don't know if it's art, but I know that that's painting." I took this as further evidence that a fresh look at the state of the medium of painting, of flat, wall-bound, framed objects, was in order. While in my view high energy in the seventies has been transmitted by the younger generation into other media, so much so that the entire pursuit of the painted image has become suspect — at least in the U.S. — still, art of overpowering authority was there to be looked at. Another example of the need people had for painting came from Sven Lukin, a pioneer of the shaped canvas early in the sixties, who remarked to me that he had "a loneliness for painting."

Still, any show needs a cohesive agent, or else the work in it invariably declines in significance. This cohesion eluded me for many months, while I periodically visited studios and galleries in America and western Europe. I knew that the cohering force would not be in the annunciatory manner of a new direction, style, generation, or movement. For a while I tried to make medium the unifying factor, i.e., oil pigment rather than acrylics, but I soon recognized the obvious: a good painter can make diverse

materials work for him (and in this exhibition several artists combine various media upon the painting surface). Time and again I found myself attracted to artists whose careers — to use a strange word for a way to spend a life as a painter in modern times — were decidedly outside the imperatives of group thinking, or critical-support activity, or the art community. When I mentioned this developing sense to critic Peter Plagens, he responded in effect, "You want to do a show of *loners;* that's a nice idea." That wasn't exactly what I had in mind, but loners are certainly attractive, more in the seventies than ever.

In the early summer of 1975, after studying lists of artists visited and works studied, I realized that the majority of the figures most on my mind were European. Our library disclosed the startling fact that the last European survey exhibitions organized by U.S. institutions took place in the 1950s: an exhibition of paintings from the collection of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, directed by James Johnson Sweeney in 1954; *The New Decade: 22 European Painters and Sculptors,* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1955, directed by Andrew Carnduff Ritchie; and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' *European Art Today: 35 Painters and Sculptors,* 1959, organized by Sam Hunter (interestingly the latter two circulated to this Museum). The fact that almost two decades had elapsed without an American-made view of European art was immediately decisive, and from that moment on the question of the exhibition's structure became one of refinement.

Keeping in mind that the original premise of the approved exhibition was to bring to Los Angeles important painting that had not previously been seen in the original, I compiled lists of European artists roughly falling into three generations. In my opinion, of the older generation — artists in their mid-sixties to eighties — six artists alone had continued to explore and deepen their art in the present decade. These artists, all of whom have been historic forces for decades, are Asger Jorn, Balthus, Francis Bacon, Jean Dubuffet, Jean Hélion, and Joan Miró. It proved impossible to present Balthus, since this artist has finished but a single painting in the past eight years, and this masterpiece was not obtainable from the institution that acquired it. And the decision to feature new work by living artists caused the omission of Asger Jorn, who was making what were arguably the strongest paintings of his life before he died in 1973. I wish also to note that a foremost figure in postwar art, sculptor-painter Max Bill, has recently been presented at this Museum in a full-scale retrospective exhibition.

Before discussing some of the unique qualities of the four senior artists in this exhibition, let me note that the twelve other artists presented here constitute roughly a second generation — most of them are in their forties — and that the youngest generation of European artists is not represented. The latter fact needs elucidation: in my visits and research I concluded that, as in America, most of the talented figures in their twenties and thirties are seemingly attracted to extra-painting media, especially video/photography/performance. Given the limitations of exhibition space, it was decided to focus on work that less resembles U.S. art.

For three decades **Francis Bacon** has been painting, in John Coplans' evocative phrase, "as if the only hope for humanity is that he paints." In recent years, Bacon's art has become more inventive and possessed of bravado and conviction, while remaining relentless and hallucinatory. Entire human figures are contorted, as only heads had been previously. The newer painting depends not at all upon older art images, such as those from Velasquez and Van Gogh. The triptych has become far more frequent — Bacon has completed about twenty in little over a decade. Three-panel paintings serve the artist with possibilities for an extra psychological and temporal dimension: a theme or form presented in the central panel is often amplified or varied in the side panels — an approach that refers back to the Renaissance. The evocation of older art is strengthened by the glass-fronted heavy gold frames, and by the reminiscence of "Grand Manner" painting. It is as if Bacon is competing with the old masters, while presenting imagery impossible to imagine before the advent of modern communications systems, particularly the news photo and the motion picture image. John Russell's daring claims — that Bacon is the first artist since Degas to re-invent the relationship between the painter and the human figure or painted object (in presenting unexpected angles and physical positions); that he "re-invented the human head" by portraying it in an entirely new way, making other images appear bland; and that he thereby "reclaimed" for painting its rights as an expressive medium — do not seem excessive in light of the new and continuing forcefulness of Bacon's art.

Jean Dubuffet's *Hourloupe* series began thirteen years ago and ends now with works presented in this exhibition. Dubuffet recently defined *Hourloupe* as a "word whose invention was based upon its sound. In French, these sounds suggest some wonderland or grotesque object or creature, while at the same time they evoke something rumbling and threatening with tragic overtones. Both are implied . . . the cycle is . . . the figuration of a world other than our own or parallel to ours." As Thomas Messer records, the *Hourloupe* appears first, "as a subconscious ballpoint doodle, translates itself into painting, reliefs,

sculpture, architectural environments" and choreographed theater — the Coucou Bazaar — and finally emerges in an extraordinary series of forty-seven paintings which round out the cycle, being large magnifications by other hands of the artist's cursive ballpoint doodles. The effect of seeing the complete set in Paris' Centre National d'Art Contemporain was remarkable — and puzzling; one did not know that the paintings were executed by remote control, so to speak, yet the character of the works, their airlessness, in particular, along with a completely disquieting sense of scale — all wrong and exactly right at the same time — was announced as if by state declaration. An exceptionally illuminating statement by the artist on these works appears in this catalog in the form of a letter to art dealer Ernst Beyeler.

Jean Hélion's life as a man and painter makes one of the fascinating stories of the twentieth century, all the more so because his new works are his highest achievement to date. This is not to say that they are likely to gain admirers any more rapidly than his proto-Pop figurative paintings of the forties, but I am convinced that the opulent, strange, frank yet allusive new paintings represent a remarkable deepening in the fifty-year career of this artist. Since his story is certain to be told more fully and properly in another context, let me quote just a passage from a 1973 notebook of Hélion's to indicate from his vantage point some of the vicissitudes in his long painting life:

> In the course of years, I've had to contradict myself frequently in these notes: to attack someone and then praise another, or vice versa. All that must be considered in its entirety.
>
> Likewise in my social demeanor.
>
> If, however, it matters to whomever to understand my voyaging; my pictorial course is clearly layered:
>
> from 1925 to 29: intense painting of instinctive reactions to nature or to an object.
>
> from 29 to 33: elaboration of a system of signs.
>
> from 34 to 39: effort to define myself and to define the world in an abstract manner.
>
> in 39 and from 43 to 46: effort to extol the world with my abstract structures.
>
> from 47 to 51: search for visual and human archetypes.
>
> from 51 to 54: effort to explain everything by close contact with the object. Effort to include appearance in the essence.
>
> from 55 to 58: light.
>
> after 58: the free part: EVERYTHING AT ONCE.

The reader is urged to savor Hélion's commentary in this catalog for his views on the new paintings.

Acute critics of **Joan Miró's** work as diverse as Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg have, over a period of decades, commented on the special impact of Miró's work when he employs thick fabric or burlap. Greenberg in 1948 writes, ". . . among the few perfect things artists have done anywhere and at any time, I would include one or two of the paintings in black, red and yellow on burlap Miró did in 1939." Rope appears early in Miró's work, in the thirties, often as a token of violence and cruelty, but later hemp and thick woven fabrics became, literally, a challenging field for the artist, providing a chance to make colors and forms and drawn lines interact with the knots and twists and braids of the surface. There is a sense of excitement and risk in these works since the viewer feels that the work had to be made directly, without predetermined forms; one recalls Miró's words, "If you have a preconception, any notion of where you are going, you will never get anywhere."

Miró's *Sobreteixim* series (the word is Catalan for "on hemp") was prompted by the artist's visit to a Barcelona art gallery in 1969, where he came upon Josep Royo's woven hangings and immediately told him: "Let's start together at once. We are going to break traditional molds." Thereafter Miró would regularly go to Royo's studio outside Barcelona from his own studio in Majorca and work with that extraordinary concentration of his, stimulated by the provocative surface — "wool and weaving give me a great sensual feeling," remarked the octogenarian — and responding with marvelous pictorial inventions, with immediate and non-habituated responses. A good example of this intense improvisatory manner appears in *Sobreteixim XII* where, in A. T. Baker's words, "Miró's eye lit upon an empty paint bucket; he rammed it into the composition then . . . added a fake spill of paint made of canvas. He proposed scorching certain areas to darken the hemp, and soon the studio flared with gouts of kerosene fire, quickly lit then doused."

There are twelve artists of a "middle" generation presented here and, to my regret, there are others whose work I could not adequately observe, such as English painters Leon Kossoff and Michael Andrews, and Italian artist Gianfranco Baruchello. Other artists, including Richard Hamilton, had no work at all available for loan due to longstanding prior commitments or to the policy of owners of their few recent works. Certain abstract work which I value —

let me cite that of Richard Smith, for one — depends on pictorial transgression into bas-relief or sculptural terrain for its strength and purpose: this work would look utterly anomalous in the present context and would serve neither artist nor the public fairly. This is not, of course, the last picture show.

With all the limitations I have set, I believe the present show contains a degree of cohesion that may indeed benefit from these omissions. I refer to the need felt by each of the participating artists to evoke and interpret the human figure — and the places a human being has been — in a fresh manner. Although the time for ideological argument about abstract versus representational expression is happily long since gone, one cannot ignore the fact that the twelve artists now under consideration — along with the four older masters — have each taken full notice of the enticements of modernism and abstraction, and are currently striving, whether at age thirty-six or eighty-three, to find convincing communicatory devices for connoting the human presence within the aesthetic limits determined by the twentieth century.

In every case the younger artists have primary regard for the handmade object, even if, in the work by Hucleux, the canvas surface seems — which it is not — to be covered by sprayed acrylic paint. Only brush, knife, and stick — extensions of the hand — are intermediary between artist and canvas. Dubuffet's use of pictorial enlargement by others appears in this regard to be a deliberate challenge, not at all to be demeaned. The artists commonly share a passion for other cultural forms, usually film, sometimes opera and ballet, always literature and history (as far as I can tell) but not dance or current music (in marked contrast to their American contemporaries). A commitment to the idea of culture in the older sense of improvement and refinement of mind and emotion, and to the possibility of transmitting such values from one generation to the next, is shared by these younger artists, insofar as I know (I haven't met Arroyo, Auerbach, or Hucleux, but I have read their published and private writings). None of them teaches art (nor does Bacon, Dubuffet, Hélion, or Miró); they do not appear to be professional artists, although as artists their professionalism is indisputable.

(Most of the artists wrote statements for this catalog, and one article has been translated from its previous publication; in my notes here I will not refer to information to be found in each artist's section, but the reader is encouraged to take those statements into account.)

There is a strong English representation here, including artists who have adopted England as their home: Peter Blake and David Hockney are British by birth; Frank Auerbach and Lucian Freud were born in Germany and raised in England; R. B. Kitaj is American-born and domiciled in England since 1958.

Peter Blake attained renown in the sixties as a leading Pop artist, as did Hockney, and in both cases this label has worn off in the seventies. This has been all to the good, I think, for while Blake's production has been sparse in the past few years (I know of only two small finished works besides the five equally small paintings in this exhibition) the haunting quality of these rare works has become more pronounced and simultaneously more subtle. Personal to the point of seeming peculiar, they depend not at all upon the support of a group sensibility. They now depend much less than before on commercial art or other art sources, and are concomitantly more unselfconscious and direct. But they are mysterious, these creatures, in whom, to quote Robert Melville, the artist has found "human warmth where others find only cliché and exploitation." The paintings in the exhibition have often been reproduced by offset lithography, and to observers of the art scene they may seem familiar from color reproduction, but in the originals one senses that every stroke is a felt response to something scrutinized, the layers of wash lying on the paper like seismographic messages from within, nuanced beyond expectation.

David Hockney has remarked that his paintings "stopped being literary about when I went to California in 1964." Also at that time the stylistic influence of Bacon and Dubuffet lessened drastically. Hockney credits his contemporary, R. B. Kitaj, with being "the artist who influenced me most strongly as an artist and a person." This is an exceptional compliment coming from one artist to another of his own generation, but it is also a statement characteristic of Hockney's sensibility as a painter: just as Kitaj's work bears little actual pictorial connection to his own work, so Hockney's comment reflects his generous, if deceptive, candor. Hockney is much more droll and understated than his reputation for caricature and satire allows. In recent years his paintings have enlarged in size (and this scale works) and in clarity, precision, and specificity. Hockney recognizes the obvious and in so doing touches evermore upon mystery. This is now signaled by the greater stillness his paintings breathe, and also by the increasingly subtle wit. One recalls the seemingly obvious remarks the artist makes in conversation, for example: "The great advantage of California for working is that the day is longer in Los Angeles"; and, speaking of his long-held desire to paint water and glass because they are not quite describable, "I like the idea of glass."

As Hockney's painting has become more "naturalistic," in terms of space as well as of subject

matter, so paintings by his close friend **R. B. Kitaj** have contrarily become more literary, complex, and imaginative, yet more lyrically abstracted. Frederic Tuten offers the insights that Kitaj's life work constitutes pieces "of the same ongoing film," with new appreciations of "the indoor and exterior" being "more purely harmonized." A commanding influence upon British painting in the sixties, Kitaj found his own sources in the solitaries: Ryder, Morandi, Hopper, Dickinson, and Balthus, as well as in De Kooning, as he acknowledges. In fact Kitaj brilliantly ransacks the main styles of modern art for his own needs, including the "mechanical fantasies of Duchamp and early Ernst (surreal poetry and the Ernst collages), the delicacy of Bonnard, the rectangularity of De Stijl and the coordinated scatter of Miró or the later Kandinsky" (John Willett in *Art International).* But above all, as he confided to me, it is Matisse who counts. "I just saw the greatest exhibition I have ever seen in my life," Kitaj said to me in July 1975, after leaving the Matisse drawings survey exhibition in Paris. In Kitaj's view, the last artist to successfully invent a new way of showing the human figure was Matisse, in his late work; and his own ambition is nothing less than to find another way to do that while remaining true to his generation's preoccupations and perceptions and to his own experiences. Kitaj's influence upon his generation and on his students had earlier resided primarily in pointing out certain little-used visual images — a family of images pertaining to politics and books and the evocations of reproduced photographs, a collagist sensibility filtered through the clean bold color of Matisse — but in recent years his art suggests the possibility of a newer art-language and, as such, his influence in the future may well be of another order.

As a foreigner settling in England, Kitaj has been a teacher and is currently still visible in certain sections of the London cultural scene. Nothing could be further from that than the life style of **Lucian Freud**, who lives almost undetectable in several London apartments in different parts of the city, with few of the locations known except to a handful, and with no telephone at any of them. Freud grants almost no interviews, allows almost no one but longtime friends into his studios. These friends are often the models of his singular works of art. The investigations of his sitters are, in John Russell's words, "prolonged almost beyond human endurance." If he studies these small, immaculate images, the viewer becomes aware of this very process of the body gradually hardening. The portraits are painted as if "by a part phrenologist, part mystic masseur, from the sinuses outward," in Michael Feaver's words. In his paintings of the seventies, Freud has moved away from the fanatically tight surfaces for which he is somewhat known in America to a far more emotional and powerful expression (Freud's seven paintings in the exhibition are his first to be seen in the U.S.). The painting is now freer and looser, more liquid, and the compositions are stranger and odd-angled. In the recent portraits, "the flesh of a face . . . is unfurled upon the canvas — almost to erupt on the surface of the picture" (Paul Overy). Freud tackles the problem of the full figure more frequently and, with intensity equal to that of the portraits, renders this larger form splayed out or spreadeagled or hunched over into a disturbing formal arrangement. The figures are "individuals, undressed, in private" (Feaver) and when there are two of them — another more recent development — it becomes clear that Freud's main concern is and has always been the nature of the relationships between people, and between the sitters and the artist. *Annie and Alice,* of 1975, is the first double female portrait; it reminds one of a 1968 Bacon triptych (reproduced John Russell, *Francis Bacon,* Greenwich, Connecticut, 1971, p. 100), but it looks like almost nothing else one has ever seen.

Frank Auerbach's primary influence as a painter was David Bomberg, a seminal figure in modern British art whose work is still insufficiently known in America. In the late sixties and seventies, as Auerbach's paintings have developed they have taken on a poignantly difficult aspect: they have become and remain famously hard to decipher; the image one knows to be there comes slowly out of the masses of pasted pigment. The brushstrokes collect into a sort of "compost" which in turn prompts other marks and configurations. The artist has commented, "The painting is a result of a multiplicity of transmutations partly as a result of external information, alluded in the drawings [fifty drawings, for example, preceded his painting the Tate Gallery's *Primrose Hill,* 1967-68], partly as the result of internal intelligences." Auerbach works on his paintings from all four sides "to ensure that the images and marks" are "correctly related to each other in every direction." Through all this laborious painting and scraping, creating and effacing, a rugged vitality comes through to the attentive viewer. One feels that the picture, for all its evident changeableness, is really resolved; one recalls Auerbach's statement, "what I'm trying to do is finish a picture; if I could do it at the first time, I would. My hope and desire is to find the most marvelous, electric, comprehensive and weighty image . . . there . . . as a fact. . . . The process is not of inquiry in the sense of some patient chewing away . . . at what is called the problems of painting — it is a desire for a marvelous luxury, a marvelous existing image . . . and it just happens that because of limiting clumsiness, and perhaps ambition, it takes me enormously long to get these." (Quoted by John

Christopher Battye in *Art and Artists,* January 1971). Regarded as a scholar and an intellectual, Auerbach has made other illuminating comments on his singular work; the following remarks were also recorded by Battye:

> I think it is all imagination. It is finding an unfamiliar geometrical connection between a series of facts; for instance, if I were able to tie up now my fingernail with the floor and the bar between the legs of that in a rhythm that worked, that would be a feat of imagination which would seem to me to be infinitely more ingenious, exciting and extraordinary than if I put three beans, a small skyscraper, a spot of red and five tin tacks knocked into the surface of a canvas onto that table. Imagination operates by connecting the unfamiliar. I can see, for instance, that Magritte has a certain magic, that the disparity of objects — the moving of African sculpture into Europe and putting them together gives them a certain glamour, but the connections between the unknown and the unworked elements in a Velasquez head of Philip IV are infinitely more daring, mysterious, alive and reverberative than the elements in a Magritte picture, which are — in a sense — familiar ideographs of unfamiliar objects put together in a canvas. Imagination is finding new conjunctions in a set of facts which have never had those connections made within it before. Occasionally, it blossoms out; I mean I'm delighted (this is a very modest thing) if, as once I had to do, I find myself having to put an eight decker bus into a street scene, or somebody has three eyes — these things can occasionally occur and I'm very grateful for them . . . but they seem to be symptoms of an activity which hopes for something to be working at a much deeper level in making the disparate and self-contradictory real world a known world, because of the conjunction within it. That's why painting is so consoling.

Aside from Jean Hélion, **Jean-Olivier Hucleux** is the only native-born Frenchman in this selection of artists. He is little known, even in France. This is apparently largely his intention, since he lives rather reclusively in the countryside outside Paris and has never, to my knowledge, allowed anyone to watch him work. The extraordinary self-portrait photograph Hucleux has provided us, and the poetic and thoughtful statement the artist also made for this catalog are just about all I know of him, other than his paintings dating back to 1971. I find the paintings astonishing creations which gain in mystery and depth one after the other. They call to mind other "photo-realist" paintings *only at first glance:* after a while their true nature, mystical and elusive — deriving in part from their being hand-painted rather than sprayed — separates them utterly from the works of countless other realists. Only the American painter Chuck Close seems to be able to imbue a photographed image with this intensity, an intensity that borders on reverence for nature simultaneous with a fascination for the reproductive mechanics of the camera.

Five artists in this exhibition have studios in Paris but are of diverse nationalities: Valerio Adami is Italian and lives near Milan as well as in Paris; Pierre Alechinsky is Belgian; Avigdor Arikha was born in Romania and is an Israeli citizen who frequently visits and works in Israel; Eduardo Arroyo is Spanish; and Antonio Segui is Argentinian.

Valerio Adami achieved renown in the sixties with images that related to the international Pop Art movement, albeit with a sense of implied nightmare and danger that set them apart from the deliberate blandness typical of Pop. In his work and in conversation the artist continually refers to film and to political and literary personages, especially poets. When he singled out T. S. Eliot's line, "The poet is constantly amalgamating disparate experience," he could have been pointing to the intention of a canvas of his own. Reminiscent of Hucleux's comment that it takes "a lifetime to do a work," is Adami's belief that if one "were to represent a trip from Milan to Paris in a rigorously analytical way, a lifetime would not be enough to finish the work": his paintings are *pictures with connections* (the title of his 1966 exhibition at Galerie Schwarz in Milan). The bright, flat planes of Matisse stand behind Adami's paintings, but in Adami forms are sliced, colors are higher pitched, a sense of flux rather than stasis is the goal: continually the theme of voyage is declared. Unlike Matisse is this artist's desire to imply a narrative, make a report, or recount a history. Hubert Damisch has pointed out that in the earlier work there is suggested "the threat of castration" by the "fetishization of objects"; whereas in work of the seventies the paintings present more ample forms and more distanced and curvilinear treatments. The constellation of implied meaning in Adami's work is best expressed, in my opinion, in an analogous verbal explication by Damisch, written in French, of Adami's painting *S. Freud Traveling Toward London*. One must know before going further that there are flies depicted in the painting, and that the word *fly* in French, "mouche," also means spot, speck, patch, bull's-eye — and slight intermittent pains. "Let the analyst beware of taking hold of this *fly* too quickly! For if the picture *hits the mark* . . . it does not do so for the purpose of suggesting the

mean aspects of analysis or its least respectable motivations . . . or of pointing to Freud's suspect passion for the closed field of the collection which . . . could be interpreted as a decisive metaphor for a *very real pain*. . . . If this picture *hits the mark,* it is because, as the word also means, it *spots,* and at first all appears as *spots before the eye,* and through this very box, this box of *flies,* this box of *spots,* thumb-indexed as it seems to be, the head of the argument enters the field" (my italics).

"If there is one word that interests me, it is the word *simultaneity*," noted Adami, and this concern has remained consistent in his work. He has been quoted by Henry Martin on his working method, "I attempt to register things coldly. My hand should be a kind of seismograph that gives body to the traces left by the course of the imagination. When I paint I am nothing but a map maker."

First identified as a founder of the COBRA group of artists based in Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam, who propounded a biomorphic-mythological-expressionistic approach in the fifties, **Pierre Alechinsky** has developed — especially since he took up acrylics in 1965 (see his text in this catalog) — continually more personal imagery and confident painting. *Confidence* is to the point here, because the nature of Alechinsky's imagery, being calligraphically agitated, alternately labyrinthine and diagrammatic, mystical and pseudo-narrative, would seem to negate the possibility of a sure-handed approach, but the recent works display just such a merger. The color paintings are fluid now, as were the earlier black and white ink sketches; and time too seems subjected to Alechinsky's sense of form, as in *Antecedents of the Subject,* an almost medieval image in which the world seems depicted in a transmogrifying process. A fabulous description of Alechinsky's painting has been supplied by the writer Julio Cortazar. The passage reads like an Alechinsky painting:

> . . . the shoe started walking and went into a house: which is how we happened to discover our treasure — the walls were covered with prodigious cities, landscapes that offered endless privilege, plants and animals that never occur twice. In our most secret annals the account of this first discovery is set down: the explorer spent a whole night trying to locate the exit from a small painting in which the trails entangled and crossed like an interminable act of love, a recurrent melody that rolled and unrolled the smoke of a cigarette passing across the fingers of a hand to unfold into a long strand of hair which, full of trains, entered the station of an open mouth against a horizon of snails and orange peels.
>
> . . . ours is an atlas of scattered pages which at the same time describe and are our chosen world; and that we speak of here, vertiginous charts of the ports, great sea compasses of ink, of rendezvous with color at the juncture of lines, of terrifying and hilarious encounters, of infinite frolic.
>
> Over-accustomed to our sad life in two dimensions, if at the beginning we remained on the surface and were satisfied with the delight of losing ourselves, finding ourselves and meeting one another at the end of the forms and roads, we soon learned to dig deeper beneath the semblances, to get down under a green to discover a blue or an altar boy, a pepper cross or a county fair; the shadow areas, for example, the Chinese lakes which we skirted at the beginning, being filled with timorous doubts, became whole speleologies in which all our fear of falling gave way to the pleasure of passing from one penumbra to another, of entering the sumptuous war of the black against white, and those of us who delved to the deepest levels discovered the secret: it's only from below, from inside, that the surfaces can be unriddled. We understood that the hand that had traced these figures and those courses and tracks that match our own, was also a hand that rose from within to the tricky air of the paper; its real time was situated on the other side of the space outside which the light of the oils broke into prisms or filled engravings with sepia icicles. Going into our nocturnal citadels was no longer a group visit with a guide making comments and ruining everything; they were ours now, we lived among them, we made love in their rooms and drank moon-mead on terraces inhabited by a throng as hustling and fitful as ourselves, tiny figures and monsters and animals embroiled also in the occupation of the territory and who received us without jealousy as though we were painted ants, the drawing moving freely out from the ink. (Translated by Paul Blackburn.)

Avigdor Arikha resumed painting in the fall of 1973 after having virtually abandoned the medium for eight years. During that non-painting period he had turned from working abstractly to doing vibrant yet grave ink drawings from life subjects. These drawings were exhibited in London, Paris, New York, and at this Museum, and they found enthusiastic admirers. Robert Hughes wrote imaginatively of "the spectacle

of eye and brain struggling to agree," saying that these small powerful images are "charged with curiosity about the world out there, but motivated by an excruciating awareness of how provisional seeing is, how mutable, how rarely final in its deductions." Barbara Rose wrote that the artist's "use of values . . . because of their variety and fullness of range from the blackest of black through ten or so intermediate shades of gray, until the stark white on the page is not, like conventional chiaroscuro, merely a function of illusionism. It suggests — or, more precisely, alludes to — a color experience." Prophetic words, indeed, for Arikha's new paintings fully depend upon and profit from the self-abnegating years of non-painting. The color is clear and clean, yet the surface quivers as if alive. The question the ink drawings posed — "Is this what I see?" (Barbara Rose) — becomes in these full-size canvases a profound philosophical inquiry.

Arikha is a scholar and writer, an intellectual whose friends comprise an extraordinary range of talents in most areas of culture and science. He has been a guest curator at this institution, conceiving the exhibition *Two Books: Matisse's "Jazz" and "The Apocalypse of St. Sever,"* and has taught courses to specialists at the Louvre in techniques and history of drawing. This exhibition presents the artist's new paintings for the first time.

Spanish painter **Eduardo Arroyo** lives in exile in France. Arroyo's work has been predominantly political, with reference to the Franco regime, and also art-political in his frequent pictorial admonishments to artists such as Duchamp and Miró. The artist has commented that:

> It is for me a primordial force to think politically. I have learned to consider a picture in relation to an ideology. . . . I was brought up in the interior of Franco's Spain and the memory, the frustrations collectively undergone, the hope and the pessimism have made this country and its history become, for me, a constant reality in the practice of my life and work. . . . A practice characteristic of me: I cannot conceive a picture without a title. To title a photograph, to title a document, is to adopt it; it is to make it, to possess it, it is to make it enter the axis of a behavior — an attitude. My painting, actually, titles reality, taking for granted that I always believed in the force of the image: for example, when the student R. Juano Casanova jumps out the window upon the arrival of police at his home in Madrid, or when the wife of the miner, Constantina Perez Martinez, is swindled by the police, these titles of nobility will certainly remain historically fixed below a painting to reveal the shame and filth of thirty-five years of dictatorship. . . . Recent events have been favorable to people who consider that painting is an effective and intimate means to influence history.

The four paintings selected for this exhibition, with the artist's concurrence, reflect another side of Arroyo's sensibility, perhaps, than these comments suggest: a more formal, yet more relaxed and humorous aspect that allows a range of sympathy, as so poignantly evoked in the two portraits of Jean Hélion making his escape from a German forced-labor camp to France. The portrait of Valerio Adami and his wife, Camilla, suggests the esteem of one painter for another; and the fanciful satire of *Three Young Englishmen Arriving in Paris* with their faces comprised of strokes of paint equaling "art" and implying their expectations of the great art city, further reveals a light and imaginative aspect of Arroyo's achievement. (See the artist's own comments on these paintings.)

In the sixties, soon after his arrival in Paris from Argentina, **Antonio Segui** brilliantly absorbed the styles of Bacon and Dubuffet and of certain American Pop artists, especially Larry Rivers. These works had a satiric edge to them relating to David Hockney while expressing Segui's own accent. Edouard Roditi noticed in 1964 that he seemed more able to "digest these borrowings" than were the French painters of his own generation. The critic wrote that Segui's style was "learned and sophisticated, but almost too slick in its use of old-master effects and artificial patina" and compared Segui to fellow Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges in employing a "fantastic display of erudition, with innumerable quotations and virtuoso imitations of so many different styles of the past."

In the present decade Segui has moved far away from other art styles, and his painting has become more simple and direct, less artful and contrived. In the paintings one encounters ambitious figure groupings and sometimes daring perspectives. Most ambitious, I think, is the urge, especially as witnessed in the two paintings finished in time for this exhibition, to invent a new look for the human figure. This follows previous series in the seventies of animal paintings. All these images of Segui's take into account our pervasive conditioning by photography in everyday life. Technically they are rather odd, a dry combination of oil and charcoal: this heightens the utterly strange quality of the newer pictures, whereby the observer himself is made to feel rather like an eavesdropper or an unannounced visitor.

Anton Heyboer only started to make paintings in November 1974, but he is well known as a printmaker

in his native Holland where he had retrospectives at The Hague, Eindhoven, and Amsterdam modern museums in 1967-68. To come upon his paintings without knowledge of his prints, as I did, is quite an experience, for the primitivistic paintings strike one as authoritative and unique, although they reveal knowledge — or seem to — of modern explorations into the art of the insane. I was struck by the exceptional power of Heyboer's images, aware of the delicacy and excruciating sensitivity of their execution and eager to know more about the artist and his work. Most of what I do know comes from his devoted dealer, from Edward de Wilde of the Stedelijk, and from J. L. Locher of The Hague Museum who wrote the catalog introduction in 1967. The paintings of Heyboer clearly reveal that he is an artist to whom art and the art-making process are as vital a necessity as air, water, food, and sexuality. He makes pictures in an extremely controlled and reflective manner, with signs and symbols that seem not only to derive from disturbance but to rely upon it. The manner in which he works — from all four sides — suggests an art of higher self-consciousness than at first appears, but is also utterly indicative of the way the man needs to live. I quote from the only writing on the artist that I know to be helpful, written in 1967, with much of the commentary being about Heyboer as a man and his life experience:

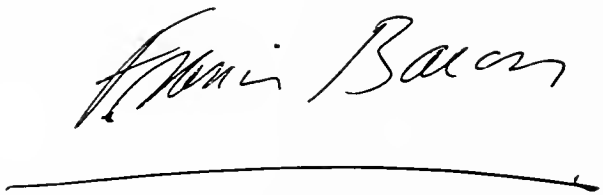
> During World War II, the Germans shipped him to a labor camp in Berlin (1943). After seven months he became desperately ill, was in fact left for dead wrapped in newspapers. He returned to live with his parents in Holland till the end of the war. He begins to draw animals.
>
> He meets the artist Jan Kagie with whom in 1948 he tours Southern France. He now does traditional landscapes. At about this point, he leaves his family. He takes a room, paints it white, furnishes it with sawed off tree trunks, charred, which he places upside-down with their roots in the air. This room he shares with his first wife and a young man. This is the first of his ménage-à-trois arrangements, characterized by having no hierarchy or human obligations. He becomes fascinated by stones. Loneliness overwhelms him. At his request he is institutionalized. When he is discharged, he emerges conscious and accepting of his different-ness and abnormality.
>
> He divorces wife number 1 (one child) in 1953. In 1954, he marries Erna and for a while lives the artist's life in Amsterdam. A child by her is born in 1957. By this time he has become a drunk. Second divorce in 1958. In 1959 he marries Yvonne only to divorce her in 1960 when he marries Maria. They leave Amsterdam and move to Den Ilp where they still reside. By this time the ménage-à-trois involves not a male but a second woman. At present her name is Lotti.
>
> He lives in a barn just north of Amsterdam. It is one room with only one small pair of windows, consequently, very dark. Nothing in the room is normative — no furniture at all, only a few places to lie down made of driftwood and a few crates. The floor is made of large very worn stones. He lives there with his wife Maria, three dogs, two cats. He is timeless and unconscious, like an animal. He can only exist in the non-normal, totally detached from his background and from society. As a consequence, his life is an attempt to make his world less and less structured and more open; this includes his relations with his wife. This could be characterized as immature and without form, hierarchy, or special obligations. He dresses that way, too — sexless and styleless. He aims to achieve a non-human open existence like the animals and like all that is natural. He achieves this through a paradoxical process, consciously choosing a borderland between life and death in order to experience both. As part of this middle zone he also accepts the constant pain and chronic aches from which he suffers. For him the abnormal and paradoxical must be continual if he is to live and survive. Normality is abomination to him as is an existence without pain.

After Heyboer took up painting in November 1974, he took on an additional wife.

Maurice Tuchman
Senior Curator,
Modern Art

Francis Bacon
Born Dublin, 1909
Resident London

Michael Holtz



Francis Bacon: What personally I would like to do would be, for instance, to make portraits which were portraits but came out of things which really had nothing to do with what is called the illustrational facts of the image; they would be made differently, and yet they would give the appearance. To me, the mystery of painting today is how can appearance be made. I know it can be illustrated, I know it can be photographed. But how can this thing be made so that you catch the mystery of appearance within the mystery of the making? It's an illogical method of making, an illogical way of attempting to make what one hopes will be a logical outcome — in the sense that one hopes one will be able to suddenly make the thing there in a totally illogical way, but that it will be totally real and, in the case of a portrait, recognizable as the person.

David Sylvester: Could one put it like this? — that you're trying to make an image of appearance that is conditioned as little as possible by the accepted standards of what appearance is.

FB: That's a very good way of putting it. There's a further step to that: the whole questioning of what appearance is. There are standards set up as to what appearance is or should be, but there's no doubt that the ways appearance can be made are very mysterious ways, because one knows that by some accidental brushmarks suddenly appearance comes in with a vividness that no accepted way of doing it would have brought about. I'm always trying through chance or accident to find a way by which appearance can be there but remade out of other shapes.

DS: And the otherness of those shapes is crucial.

FB: It is. Because, if the thing seems to come off at all, it comes off because of a kind of darkness which the otherness of the shape which isn't known, as it were, conveys to it. For instance, one could make a mouth in a way — I mean, it comes about sometimes, one doesn't know how — I mean you could draw the mouth right across the face as though it was almost like the opening of the whole head, and yet it could be like the mouth. But, in trying to do a portrait, my ideal would really be just to pick up a handful of paint and throw it at the canvas and hope that the portrait was there.

DS: I can see why you would want the painting to look as if it had come about in that way, but do you mean you actually want to do that?

FB: Well, I've tried often enough. But it's never worked that way. I think I would like it to happen that way because, as you know perfectly well, if you have somebody painting your room, when he puts the first brushstroke on the wall, it's much more exciting than the finished wall. And, although I may use, or appear to use, traditional methods, I want those methods to work for me in a very different way to that in which they have worked before or for which they were originally formed. I'm not attempting to use what's called avant-garde techniques. Most people this century who have had anything to do with the avant garde have wanted to create a new technique, and I never have myself. Perhaps I have nothing to do with the avant garde. But I've never felt it at all necessary to try and create an absolutely specialized technique. I think the only man who didn't limit himself tremendously by trying to change the technique was Duchamp, who did it enormously successfully. But, although I may use what's called the techniques that have been handed down, I'm trying to make out of them something that is radically different to what those techniques have made before.

DS: Why do you want it to be radically different?

FB: Because I think my sensibility is radically different, and, if I work as closely as I can to my own sensibility, there is a possibility that the image will have a greater reality.

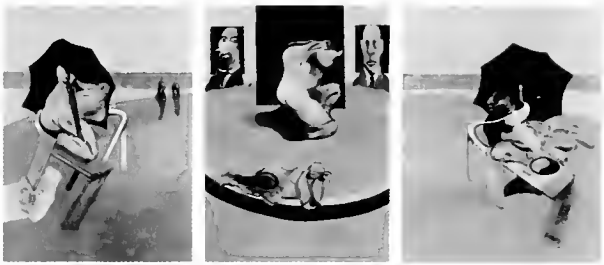
DS: And do you still have that obsession you used to talk about having with doing the one perfect image?

FB: No, I don't now. I suppose, as I get older, I feel I want to cover wider areas. I don't think that I have that other feeling any longer — perhaps because I hope to go on painting until I die and, of course, if you did the one absolutely perfect image, you would never do anything more.

From *Francis Bacon: Interviewed by David Sylvester,*
New York, 1975,
pp. 105, 107

Francis Bacon
Triptych (right panel), May-June 1974
Oil and pastel on canvas
78 x 58 in. (198 x 147.5 cm.)
Private collection, Switzerland

Triptych, May-June 1974



FB: Well, I would like now — and I suppose it's through thinking about sculpture — I would like, quite apart from the attempt to do sculpture, to make the painting itself very much more sculptural. I do see in these images the way in which the mouth, the eyes, the ears could be used in painting so that they were there in a totally irrational way but a more realistic way, but I haven't come round yet to seeing quite how that could be done in sculpture, I might be able to come round to it. I do see all the time images that keep on coming up which are more and more formal and more and more based upon the human body, yet taken further from it in imagery. And I would like to make the portraits more sculptural, because I think it is possible to make a thing both a great image and a great portrait.

DS: It's very interesting that you associate the idea of the great image with sculpture. Perhaps this goes back to your love of Egyptian sculpture?

FB: Well, it's possible. I think that perhaps the greatest images that man has so far made have been in sculpture. I'm thinking of some of the great Egyptian sculpture, of course, and Greek sculpture, too. For instance, the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum are always very important to me, but I don't know if they're important because they're fragments, and whether if one had seen the whole image they would seem as poignant as they seem as fragments. And I've always thought about Michelangelo; he's always been deeply important in my way of thinking about form. But although I have this profound admiration for all his work, the work that I like most of all is the drawings. For me, he is one of the very greatest draughtsmen, if not the greatest.

DS: I've often suspected, since as far back as 1950, that, with many of your nude figures, certain Michelangelo images had been there in the back of your mind at least, as prototypes of the male figure. Do you think this has been the case?

FB: Actually, Michelangelo and Muybridge are mixed up in my mind together, and so I perhaps could learn about positions from Muybridge and learn about the ampleness, the grandeur of form from Michelangelo, and it would be very difficult for me to disentangle the influence of Muybridge and the influence of Michelangelo. But, of course, as most of my figures are taken from the male nude, I am sure that I have been influenced by the fact that Michelangelo made the most voluptuous male nudes in the plastic arts.

DS: Do you think that certain Michelangelo images of figures entwined have had an influence on your coupled figures?

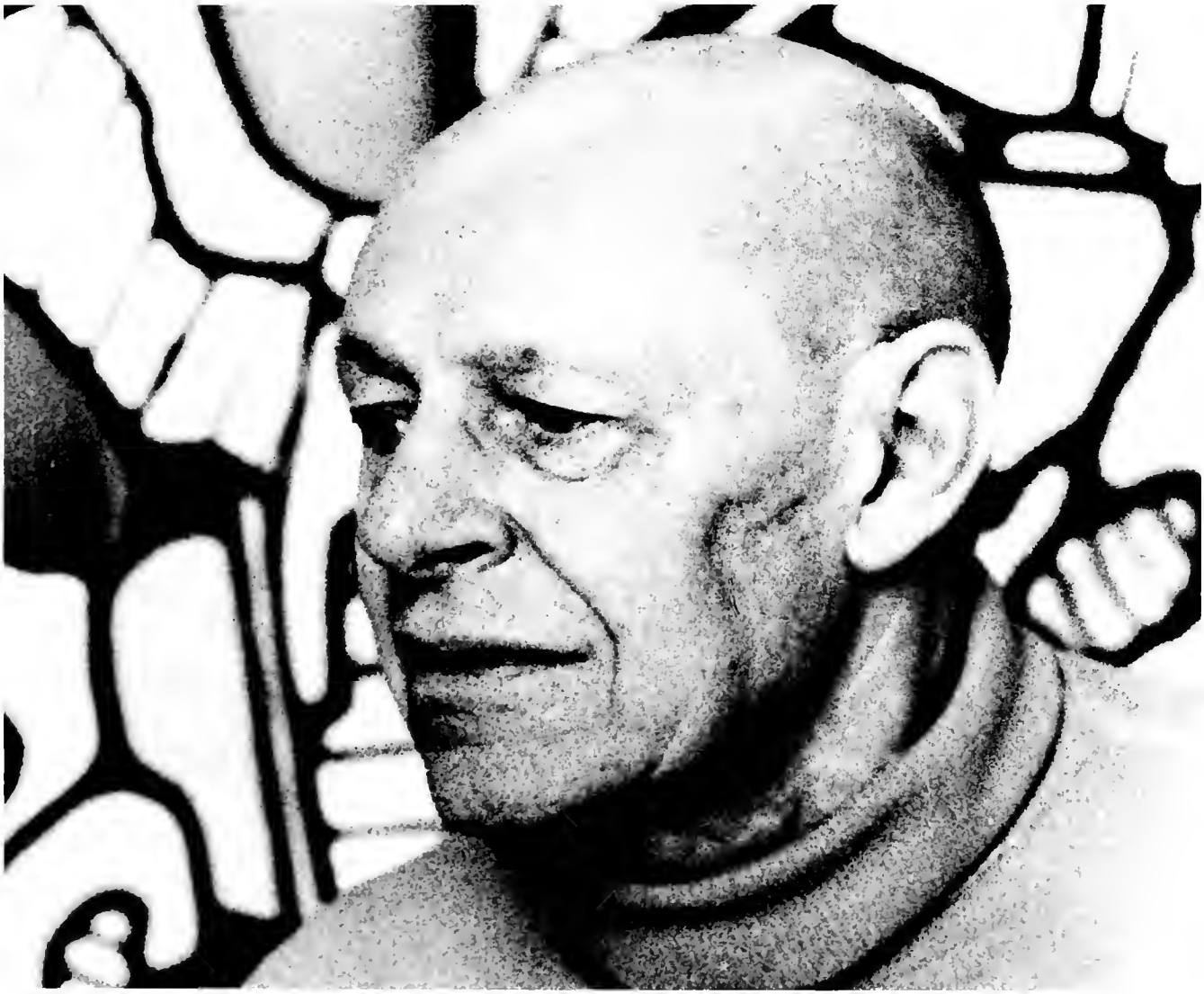
FB: Well, these have very often been taken from the Muybridge wrestlers — some of which appear, unless you look at them under a microscope, to be in some form of sexual embrace. Actually, I've often used the wrestlers in painting single figures, because I find that the two figures together have a thickness that gives overtones which the photographs of single figures don't have. But I don't only look at Muybridge photographs of the figure. I look all the time at photographs in magazines of footballers and boxers and all that kind of thing — especially boxers. And I also look at animal photographs all the time. Because animal movement and human movement are continually linked in my imagery of human movement.

DS: And are the nudes, at the same time, closely related to the appearance of specific people? Are they to some extent portraits of bodies?

FB: Well, it's a complicated thing. I very often think of people's bodies that I've known, I think of the contours of those bodies that have particularly affected me, but then they're grafted very often onto Muybridge's bodies. I manipulate the Muybridge bodies into the form of the bodies I have known. But, of course, in my case, with this disruption all the time of the image — or distortion, or whatever you like to call it — it's an elliptical way of coming to the appearance of that particular body. And the way I try to bring appearance about makes one question all the time what appearance is at all. The longer you work, the more the mystery deepens of what appearance is, or how can what is called appearance be made in another medium.

From *Francis Bacon: Interviewed by David Sylvester,* pp. 114, 116, 118

Jean Dubuffet
Born Le Havre, France, 1901
Resident Paris



Paca Gallary

Dear Ernst Beyeler;

As for the injustice they do me about these paintings, certain specialists and would-be experts, as I am told — that they haven't been painted by my own hand — I find it idiotic. One shouldn't worry about the methods that I have chosen to execute my works, and it is up to me to decide that. It is not by the methods used that one should judge a work, it is by what it actually is, by its impact, and by its language; everything else derives from the anecdote and a fetishism of specialists, which has nothing to do with the actual virtue of the work. One should really suppose that if I had thought that these paintings had something to gain by making the copy myself, I would have done it, and that if I did not, it is because I have my reasons. It is that contrary to the other paintings that I had done previously, these do not resort to autographic effects, and even quite the contrary, they try to exclude them. They aim at an effect of impassibility and impersonality — an effect of absence, I would say. The method by which they are secured, which is to enlarge with the aid of a projector the sketches that had been cursively made on paper with a felt pen, and to carefully copy this enlarged image with a brush, results in producing paintings endowed with a very special characteristic which comes across as unusual and abnormal, since the movement of the sketches, if they had been improvised directly on the canvas in the final step, would not be at all the same as the one which results from the enlargement of a small drawing. The copy of the image with a brush rendered by the projector is a work where ingenuity has no place whatsoever, and which demands only patience and minuteness. To compel myself to do it myself would be in some measure to distort the significance of the work in leading the spectator to expect there some effect of direct improvisation which is precisely what I want to avoid. I shall go further: it was important, it was capital, in order to reinforce the effect of impassibility and impersonality that I have mentioned above, that I not put my hand to it. That is a principal outcome of the technique applied and the effect aimed at. It goes without saying that this technique of enlargement, with the copy executed by another hand, which is good for these paintings conceived expressly to be realized in this manner, would not be good for others. But I maintain that for these it is the sole legitimate and perfectly adapted technique. For paintings of another kind such a method would produce a diminution, an adulteration. For these it produces on the contrary, a reinforcement. These are paintings conceived to be executed in two successive stages. And it is important that to see them one feel them. It is possible that people conditioned by habits and traditions appear shocked by my attempt at paintings, which are completely opposed to what is generally accepted, and which endeavor and attempt to be anti-autographic, depersonalized; my own idea is that all methods are good to produce exciting work. That the executed work be exciting is definitely the one and only thing that counts. The devil with all other criteria! These paintings are placed beyond norms and to apply to them the criteria of the norm is inadequate.

Sincerely,
Jean Dubuffet
February 28, 1975

From *Jean Dubuffet, Sites, Tricolores, Paysages Castillans,* Galerie Beyeler Basel, April-May 1975

Jean Dubuffet
Tricolor Site V, 1974
Vinyl on canvas
76¾ x 51¼ in. (195 x 130 cm.)
Pace Gallery, New York

Jean Hélion
Born Couterne,
Normandy, France, 1904
Resident Châteauneuf-en-
Thymerais, France

Galeria Saint-Germain

Hélion

Jean Hélion: I've always wanted to do the same thing. I shall see if I was mistaken or not. I've always proceeded in the same direction, and I have often been surprised that it has not been evident. Well, I hope that the fifty years of work assembled will show that it is a continuous effort. There are no contradictions. . . . I shall explain to you what, for me, is the same thing: that from the beginning, the artist seeks to go all the way to the aim, to the purpose of the painting, and that aim has several dimensions. There is one aim which is the very technique itself of the painting — the rhythms, the colors, the visual possibilities — that which abstraction has so well developed; there is another aim which derives from the imaginary side of the artist, who finds a revelation in the painting and which is unforeseeable; finally, there is the aim of a dialogue with what one calls the real, the existing — that is to say, the meeting of objects which comes to declare your own self-portrait. Painting has all those dimensions. Each of the stages could seem different from the other, but these are facets of the same reality which one undertakes to seize. I expect, myself, a sort of revelation of all that. I was aware of that. Have I really done it? That you will tell me.

It is a question of priority. There is no definitive, complete work. There is no realized masterpiece. That which one terms the genre in painting is rather the priority given to such an aspect in this picture; in one, to the technique, in the other, to rhythm or to color; in the third, to the object, that is to say, to the capacity to clarify this object, to recognize in it the whole system of the world.

Several times in the course of the ten years which I had dedicated to abstraction, I believed I had arrived at a state which was complete, and at that moment, a curiosity awakened for that which it was not. For example, I did abstractions, the best in my view, such as the one which they named *Ile de France* which is at the Tate Gallery. I recall that in doing it, I looked through the window of my atelier, and I found that the exterior world was more beautiful than my picture. Nevertheless, I wasn't at all preoccupied with this outside world. But there was something missing in my picture.

arTitudes: You have implied that an artist can pursue expression especially if there is a modulation on the inside. I am thinking of Hartung. One may say that at the age of 30, everything is implicit in his works, and that everything takes place in depth. There is then one possibility. However, in your case, there was a moment when this abstract expression seemed to you inadequate.

JH: I believe that Hartung also has his anxieties. When a picture is inadequate, he starts afresh and intensifies it in a certain manner. There is, nevertheless, a certain number of definite variations, but he has succeeded in retaining only one expression. Because he has kept only one expression, hasn't he had but one preoccupation? I have accepted that expression was a method of placing in evidence a truth, and that it was this truth that mattered. He believes that to maintain continuity in expression is also important. He justifies it thoroughly by his work. But I expect to justify in mine this apparent diversity which is not the search for diversity but the search for dimension.

JH: You cite the word "taste" just in time. Personally, I have no taste. I don't like taste. If the most beautiful picture is in good taste, it is not that which is good in the picture. In essence, the Mona Lisa is of very poor taste after a certain time.

aT: She is indecent, the Mona Lisa!

JH: Indecent, that's good. That means: "brave." Indecency is a word of virtue, it seems to me. It means that one exposes what one usually arbitrarily conceals. Long live indecency. But that was not my intent; I sought only to be true. If, being true, I am indecent, thank you. You have given me the finest compliment I could wish.

aT: Do you have the feeling that your work is indecent?

JH: No, it always appeared to me natural. It is rather my friends or my opponents who told me that my work was indecent. They revealed me to myself. It is not wrong to tell someone that he is naked. It's what one can do at best to reveal himself. It is arbitrary that culture, that civilization disguised us, and covered man with — I don't know what — rags.

aT: Without even taking a picture like *Four Seated Nudes*, which is an indecent work, according to a strict code, I see a level more indecent in your work.

Jean Hélion
Marketplace Triptych (right panel), 1973-74
Acrylic on canvas
78¾ x 110 in. (200 x 280 cm.)
Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris

Marketplace Triptych, 1973-74

The one of placing a cabbage on a table and painting it today. That seems to me something extremely indecent.

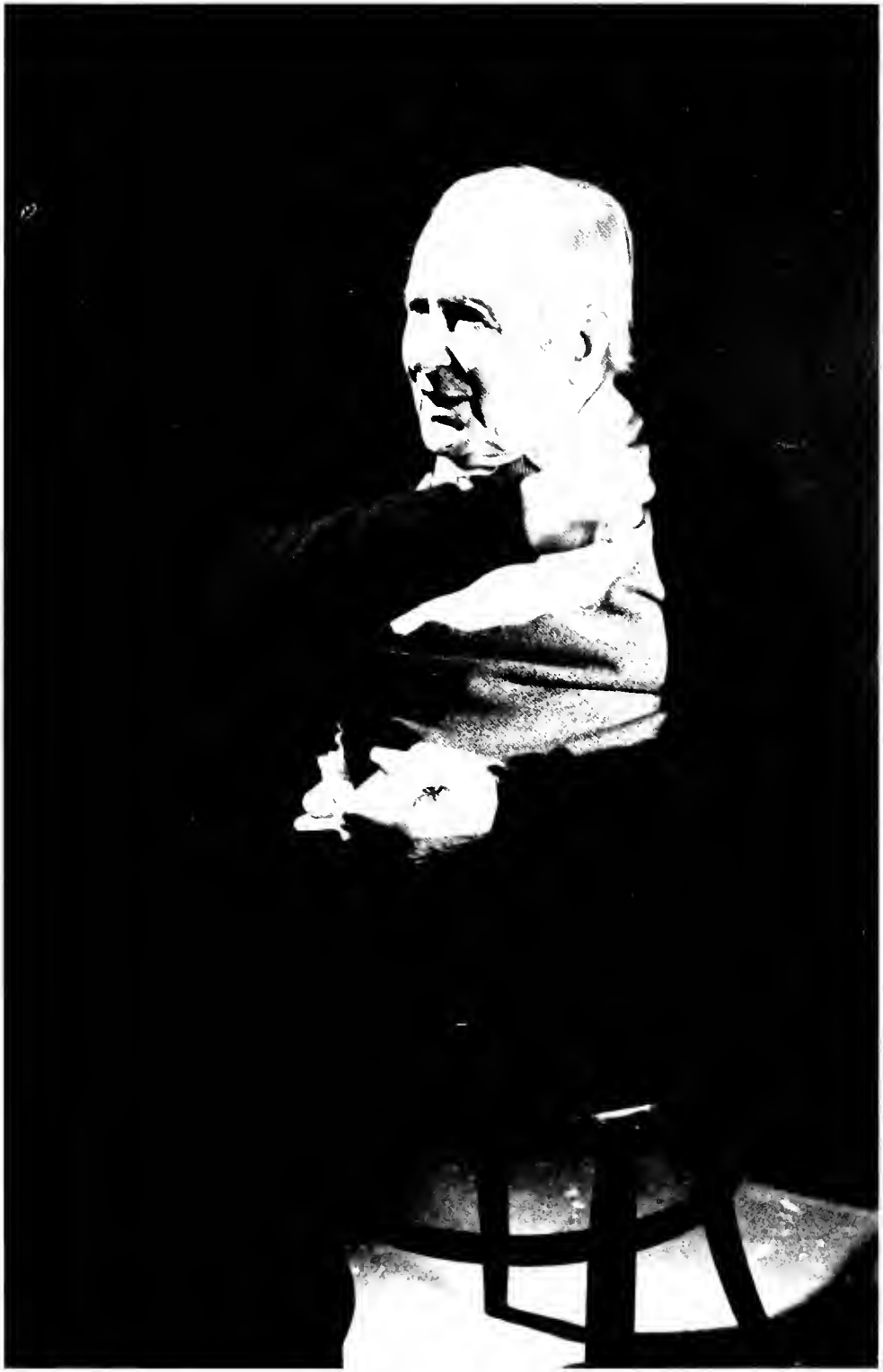
JH: Now there is a definition of the word indecent that I take as a compliment. A woman who has her eyes open and who shows the treasures she has, how can one call that indecency, except that if indecency means that it is very good. And if I place a cabbage on the table, it is because it is worthy of being there. I find that a cabbage is as beautiful as a rose, and I put it in a pot like a bouquet of roses. By indecent, don't you want to say liberating, finally? Liberating! Myself, I placed a cabbage in the arms of a woman thinking that she carried there a bouquet of flowers. I studied this cabbage, I showed the rhythm of its leaves, which is superb, it seems to me. A cabbage is a magnificent rose, which is green, which costs one franc a kilo, and which one also eats. Why not? That suits me fine. I have the impression that a large quantity of beauty, upon giving beauty its most extensive meaning, is misused, and that one of the roles of the artist is to go to look for it, to show it, and above all, to give it. Not to sell it, to give it. A particular style of a painter was spoken of which permitted its own recognition. Isn't it very extraneous? Isn't it the profound subject matter of an artist that matters? "If I don't have any blue, I'll take red," Picasso used to say. He was right. He wished to say, that it was not the blue that mattered, nor the red, but what he was going to do with it. I have said sometimes that with a finger in the dust, one makes a stroke as important as with the rarest colors. It is the stroke that counts. Give me anything, and I will make a painting. Because for a long time one neglected materials, artists have now been led to exalt them, to study them profoundly. That was very well: one tries to bring up to date a thing neglected. Once it is up to date, we have returned to the general domain. It is not important any more. One material is as good as another. A little plaster was always sufficient to realize the most beautiful visual thing in the world. We must go back and exalt the forgotten things. Upon placing a cabbage in a vase, I believe that I do justice to this superb flower which has been made a cooking vegetable. The world is beautiful from one end to the other. It is beautiful between the legs, it is beautiful at the level of a cabbage, it is beautiful everywhere. It is somewhat odious, this idea of decency. It is an appalling police posture by which we are forced to have certain attitudes or certain tastes. We should destroy all these barriers. And this is one of the roles of artists: to restore liberty to forms, to colors, to the subject when there is one, to objects, to materials, to everything.

aT: Let us say in conclusion that artistic creation such as it may be, can play a role in the evolution of man, at least to the degree that it is truly free.

JH: Yes! We are champions of freedom. One does not take us for fighters because we are very tender people, we love. That's the indecency: love. To dare to love a cabbage, to dare to love a triangle, it is the same thing. It's the same indecency. I had the feeling of approaching the world, loving the world with the same freedom as had Mondrian who dared to love a sign of the cross. He loved it to the point of destroying it: at the end of his life there is no more than a bewilderment of bits. Let us speak of love. It is love today that is indecent.

From "L' indécence d'aimer,"
an interview with Jean Hélion
by François Pluchart reprinted from
the magazine a*rTitudes*, no. 21/23,
as a catalog for *Hélion,*
50 Years of Painting, the Galerie
Karl Flinker, May 22-June 30, 1975

Joan Miró
Born Barcelona, 1893
Resident Mallorca



Clovis Prevost

I work like a gardener.

. . . I find the favorable atmosphere for this tension in poetry, music, architecture — Gaudi, for example, is amazing — in my daily walks, in certain noises: the noise of horses in the country, the crunching of wooden cartwheels, the steps, the cries in the night, the crickets.

The spectacle of the cry agitates me.

I am agitated when I see, in the immense sky, the crescent of the moon or the sun. There are, besides, in my pictures, some very little shapes in the large empty spaces. The empty spaces, the empty horizons, the empty planes, all that is cast off always impresses me very much.

In the contemporary visual climate, I like factories, night lights, the world seen from a plane. I owe one of the greatest emotions of my life to the flight from Washington at night.

Seen from the airplane, the night, a city, it is a wonder. And then, by plane, one sees everything. A small individual, even a very small doe, one sees it. And that takes on an enormous importance, as in absolute darkness, during a night flight, above the country, one or two lights of country people.

The simplest things give me ideas. A plate in which a peasant eats his soup, I like that better than ridiculously rich plates of rich people.

Popular art always moves me. There is no trickery or fraud in this art. It goes directly to the point. It surprises, and it is so rich in possibilities.

For me, an object is alive. This cigarette, this box of matches contain a secret life much more intense than certain humans. When I see a tree, I receive a shock, as if it were something that breathes, that speaks. A tree is also something human.

Immobility strikes me. This bottle, this glass, a large pebble on a deserted beach, these are the immobile things, but they release, in my soul, great movements.

Just as the harmony of the body is of the same nature as an arm, a hand, a foot, everything must be homogeneous in a picture.

In mine, there is a sort of sanguine circulation. If a form is misplaced, and this circulation stops: the equilibrium is broken.

When a canvas does not satisfy me, I feel a physical discomfort, as if I were ill, as if my heart didn't function well, as if I could no longer breathe, as if I were suffocating.

I work in a state of passion and rapture. When I begin a canvas, I obey a physical impulse, the need to fling myself; it is like a physical discharge or release.

Of course, canvas cannot satisfy me immediately. And, at first, I experience a discomfort which I have described for you. But as I am the combative sort in those things, I begin the struggle.

It is a struggle between me and what I do, between me and the canvas, between me and my discomfort. This struggle excites me and thrills me. I work until the discomfort ceases.

I begin my pictures under the effect of a shock, which I feel strongly and which makes me escape reality. The cause of this shock may be a little thread which breaks away from the canvas, a drop of water that falls, this imprint that my finger leaves on the brilliant surface of this table.

At any rate, I need a point of departure, be it a grain of dust or a burst of light. This form begets a series of things, one thing giving birth to another thing.

Thus a piece of thread can release a world for me.

I work like a gardener or like a wine grower. The things come slowly. My vocabulary of forms, for example, I did not discover at once. It was formed almost in spite of myself.

Things follow their natural course. They grow, they mature. It is necessary to graft. It is necessary to irrigate as for a green salad. That ripens in my mind. I also always work at a great many things at the same time. And even in different domains: painting, engraving, lithography, sculpture, ceramics.

The subject matter, the tools dictate to me a technique, a means of giving life to a thing. If I attack wood with a gouge, it puts me in a certain state of mind. If I attack a lithograph stone with a brush or a copper plate with an etching needle, that puts me in other states of mind. The encounter of the tool and the subject matter produces a shock which is something alive and which I think will have a repercussion upon the spectator.

In a picture, one must be able to discover new things every time one sees it. But one may look at a

Joan Miró
Sobreteixim XVI, 1973
Paint, burlap, yarn,
and fabric on woven ground
74½ x 124 in. (189 x 315 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Zurich

picture for a week and not think about it anymore. One may also look at a picture for a second and think about it all one's life. For me, a picture must be like sparks. It must dazzle like the beauty of a woman or a poem. It must have a radiance, it should be like those stones which the Pyrenean shepherds use to light their pipes.

More than the picture itself what counts is what it hurls into the air, what it scatters. It matters little that the picture may be destroyed. Art may die; what matters is that it has spread the seeds on the earth. Surrealism pleased me because the surrealists did not consider painting as an end, a painting; actually one should not concern himself that it remains as such, but rather that it leaves seeds, that it spreads the seed from which other things are born.

The picture must be productive. It must give birth to a world. One may see these flowers, people, horses, no matter what, provided that they reveal a world, something living.

I feel the need to attain the maximum intensity with the minimum of means. This is what led me to give to painting a more and more stripped-down character.

To really become a man, one should release himself from the self. In my case, it is necessary to cease being Miró. That is to say, a Spanish painter, belonging to a society limited by its frontiers, its social and bureaucratic conventions. In other words, one should go toward anonymity.

Anonymity always ruled in the great epochs. And today, one feels the need of it, more and more.

But, at the same time, one feels the need of an absolutely individual action, completely anarchical from the social point of view.

Why? Because an act profoundly individual is anonymous. Anonymous, it allows one to attain the universal. I am convinced of it: the more a thing is local, the more it is universal.

Joan Miró
From *XX^e siècle mensuel,*
vol. 1, no. 1, February 15, 1959;
reprinted in the catalog for *Joan Miró*
at the Grand Palais,
May 17-October 13, 1974

Valerio Adami
Born Bologna, 1935
Resident Paris
and Arona, Italy

Fausto Giaccone

Valerio Adami
Concerto for Four Hands, 1975
Acrylic on canvas
95¾ x 143¾ in. (243 x 365 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Paris

Pierre Alechinsky
Born Brussels, 1927
Resident Bouguival, France

John Lefebre

It doesn't tempt me anymore, painting in oil. Seduced by lack of knowledge of the matter, I have erred about the materials for twenty years. In disorder, here is the incomplete list of what I detest today: the lead tubes concealing the true color of their contents, wherein the decision, the need to have to open them; the hard brushes of *soie de porc* suited to give a first coating of a mark on a door; the dirt at the bottom of the saucer; the too frequent prophetic step forward; the everlasting three steps backward; the position of the combatant on his feet; the immaculate canvas — conceivably — which awaits white and mocking on the easel, the instrument which resembles the invention of Monsieur Guillotin; the work of gravity, this fluid color flowing as from the top of a jar of jam; the heavy intractable paste; the knife which has scraped too much; then waiting days, weeks for it to dry; to find later cracks and ageing; having found in it (the oil painting) so rarely the freshness of the ink sketch or the cadence and the report of the welcome drawing.

My first painting in acrylic dates from 1965. I was painting on a sheet of paper in Walasse Ting's studio in New York; I took this sheet to France. I began to observe it pinned to the wall while sketching row by row on long strips of rice paper. I pinned these around; I had just organized *Central Park,* my first painting with marginal notes. I fastened everything upon a canvas backing: first superimposition. I was soon going to break myself away from painting in oil. I had never allowed myself these reorganizations, movements, comings and goings.

Ideal medium: spring water in full quantity. Prop: a single sheet of paper peel which tailors use, called cutting paper. I spread the paper in the sun and it awaits me. The colors and the water fill a number of identical basins — I know their weight — the right hand which does not know the brush keeps them each in their turn. The tool: this same Japanese brush which serves me completely for the sketch, the painting, the print. Nine centimeters of goat hair mounted upon nineteen centimeters of choice bamboo. With it, with them (water, color, basin, brush, paper), I go from the drawing to the painting by successive coatings of materials and ideas, half-transparent, half-opaque; some letting themselves penetrate as if they regret the shadows from which they flee, others sparing themselves, putting aside what will finally be saved.

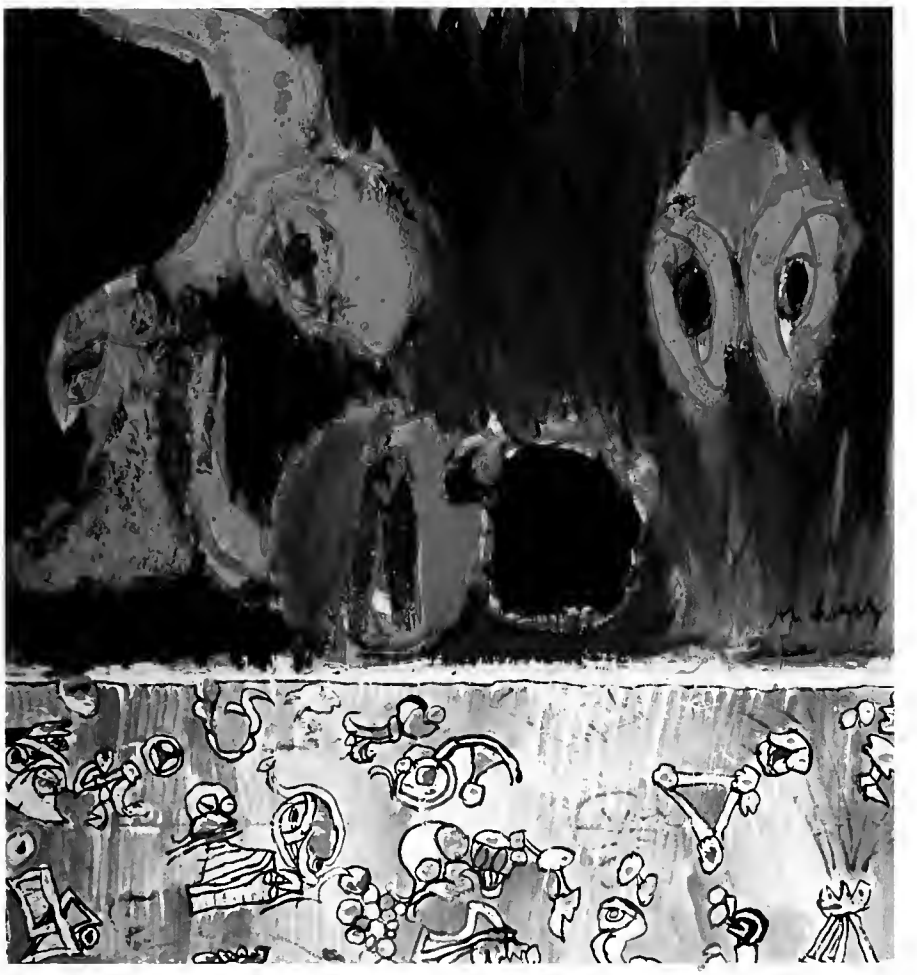
To draw an image with no matter what, no matter where (tablecloth of a restaurant, a few drops of wine, the tip of a finger) will not erase the memory of the prop felt, the ductile material, the chosen tool. It still remains to unite space and light, silence or music. To have time. To be in physical condition. To have morale, no longer to look indefinitely out the window. To receive the image without labeling it. To utilize the situation in its entirety. To let it come. To connect.

Like Swann: to say that I have suffered so much for a woman (read: technique) who was not my type.

On your work table have first a collection of pencils on hand (I offer you this one), take care that they are perfectly sharpened (this little penknife is yours now). You will doubtless commit some errors, so you will also need this eraser (here it is), and, for a final copy, always a clean pen (it is yours). Ink. Not forgetting this paint scraper the edge of which you will regularly sharpen on this Arkansas stone (please), for they concern no one, your erasures, they have to be invisible, etc. It is thus that Rimsky-Korsakov gave his first lesson in composition to Igor Stravinsky. Manuel Rosenthal *dixit.*

Most of all, I shall miss the intoxicating perfume of turpentine that Marcel Duchamp discovered, for which alone many painters should not have abandoned their passion. Which enterprising druggist will propose to his clientele of artists having chosen acrylic (versatile and smart, but with a vague musty odor of ammonia disinfectant) a vaporizer bottle spreading the fragrance all over? The label would read: *Incense of the studio.*

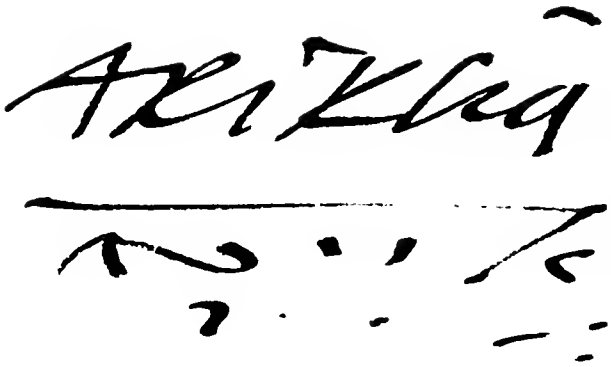
Pierre Alechinsky, "Les moyens du bord," from *Pierre Alechinsky,* Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, November 15, 1974-January 15, 1975, and Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, February 5-April 6, 1975



Pierre Alechinsky
Chagrin granat, 1973
Acrylic on canvas
62¼ x 60¾ in. (159 x 154 cm.)
Private collection; courtesy Lefebre Gallery, New York

Avigdor Arikha
Born Romania, 1929;
to Israel 1946;
to Paris 1949
Resident Paris,
frequent trips
to Israel

Henri Cartier-Bresson



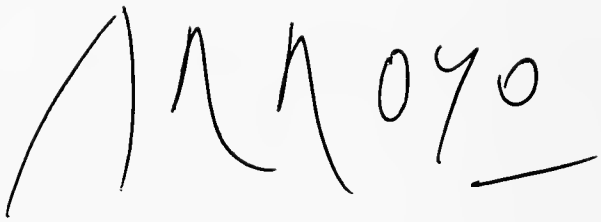
Observation and imagination seem in turn to govern art history. Brief periods dominated by observation (objective truth, nature) like the two or three decades of High Renaissance, Early Baroque, or Impressionism are followed by longer periods dominated by imagination ("maniera," stylistic experiment) like the fifty or sixty years of Mannerism or Modernism. However, there is no clear-cut division between the two orientations, and their dividing line would seem like the division between two connected seas. Hence the recurrent confusion when the periodic change sets in. Suddenly all that was credible is no longer so. Doubt sets in. But what may appear to the future to be a change in orientation is actually felt by the solitary artist as a disoriented path. His step is in darkness (contrary to the strongly oriented collective styles). Style grows from within. It is to the artist what the sound of voice is to oneself: a quality of truth.

Avigdor Arikha
July 1975

Avigdor Arikha
Interior, 1975
Oil on canvas
76¾ x 51¼ in. (195 x 130 cm.)
Collection of the artist

Eduardo Arroyo
Born Madrid, 1937
Resident Positano, Italy, and Paris

Aurelio Amendole



After a nearly total eclipse lasting almost fifteen years, the idea that the United States seems interested again in European painting surprises and fascinates me simultaneously. While in Europe we were constantly kept in touch with every little fact concerning the evolution of any American artistic activity, it seemed that a black out had fallen over the other side of the Atlantic, prohibiting any cultural and artistic interest. Therefore, I enthusiastically join this first and courageous initiative, fully realizing the handicap that exists, and hoping that this enterprise is the start of a real dialogue between European and American painters.

I said handicap. How can I be judged from the four recent paintings that will represent me in this exhibition? How can the political and cultural itinerary that I have pursued and have called my own and that of my generation's be understood through these four works?

Hélion said one day that he painted what he loved, whereas I painted what I didn't love. It is true. When I started painting in the early sixties, I didn't want to be a painter. Consider the situation of painting in Europe at that time: an exclusive heritage of abstract painting, a School of Paris omnipresent, yet bloodless and agonized. One had to create a healthy reaction, paint something else, fight. And only the politico-cultural fight interested us. There were only a few of us, isolated. Nobody was interested in an "anecdotal" and therefore — of course — aggressive painting. Only action was important to us: our aim was the change and transformation of society. Of course, I painted what I didn't like. I wanted to combat fascism in all its forms, to combat all police forces, oppressions, shameful compromises, treasons, and hypocrisies, all the Civil Guards, the Bonapartes, the senile Churchills, the fake idols, the hollow and misleading slogans, the greased moustached torturers, the Conchitas with castanettes, the Caudillos. As a reaction against the painting in power, the established painting, against the empty and meandering abstractionism of the sixties, we were just a few, painting ideological canvases, and why not say so: diverse. This led to the posters of May 1968.

I didn't take myself to be a painter. I could have found some other way to say what I wanted to say. The fact is it was easier for me to express it with a brush and colors.

Take, however, the paintings which you will exhibit. *Three English Painters Arriving in Paris.* OK, it is an attack again. I paint what I don't like: vain and abrasive painters, without principles, delinquents in a certain sense. Privileged people accepted by mediocrities. Not because they are English, of course, but because they are the buffoons of a society they flatter, and which flatters them back. I have painted a whole series of these palette-skinned, color-spattered faced gangster-painters.

But the three other paintings are portraits of friends, a selection from a family portrait, in a way. You see, suddenly I had the need to paint what I like, the people I love, Hélion, Saul Steinberg, Valerio Adami, Gilles Aillaud, Aldo Mondino . . . all friends, painters: I felt no need to spatter their faces. Looking back, how could I do all this? I'm surprised, intrigued, I do not always recognize myself, but I do not deny anything. I will never be a painter with a wisely deducted and permanent vocabulary. Violent satire, abrupt changes in style will probably remain the characteristics of my expression. I will never be a triumphant painter, a painter-painter. I cannot breathe without irony. For me, painting is not a pretty gesture, an ensemble of little sensitive touches; no, it's a unified mass, a strong and irrevocable decision to make.

At the other end, I think the public evolves in the same way. Finished now is the time of facility, finished are the fat years of paintings of easy virtue. We are in the process of experiencing a general austerity, a new consciousness at all levels, and the reading of works will be done much more seriously, and the demands made will be greater at all levels and in all places.

Eduardo Arroyo
Summer 1975
Translated by Danièle Thompson

Eduardo Arroyo
Three Young English Painters Arriving in Paris, 1974
Oil on canvas
51¼ x 63¾ in. (130 x 162 cm.)
H. R. Astrup, Oslo

Frank Auerbach
Born Berlin, 1931;
to England, 1939
Resident London

Peter Stark

My aim is to record the mind's grasp of its matter.
To render a sensation of something specific, fully tangible; which requires imagination.
I hope to celebrate the truth after having exhausted the stock of lies, as one might find oneself telling the truth after a quarrel.

Frank Auerbach
June 1975

Frank Auerbach
Head of J.Y.M., 1974
Oil on board
28 x 24 in. (71 x 61 cm.)
Tom Eyton, London

Peter Blake
Born Dartford,
Kent, England, 1932
Resident Somerset,
England

Peter Blake

There was a time toward the end of the 1960s when I was having to spend more time talking and writing about what Pop Art was than I was able to spend on paintings, so I moved from London to Somerset and stopped writing about my work; I managed to avoid doing so until now.

I had already said that I would sooner not write something for this catalog, until yesterday, when I had a telephone call from Ron Kitaj, who explained some things about the exhibition; he told me quite briefly, so it is quite possible that I may have gotten a few of the facts slightly wrong. He said this is the first mixed show of European painting in the U.S.A. in twenty years, which is certainly surprising, but I do remember that when I visited the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the only English painting on show was a Francis Bacon. Of course, Francis Bacon is a marvelous painter, but there is also a lot of other very good painting going on in Europe. So, I hope you will enjoy this glimpse of what is being done here.

A show which contains both Bacon and Balthus, and some of the other painters who are exhibiting (at the time of writing I don't know everyone in the exhibition) should be an exciting event. It is a show I would very much like to see.

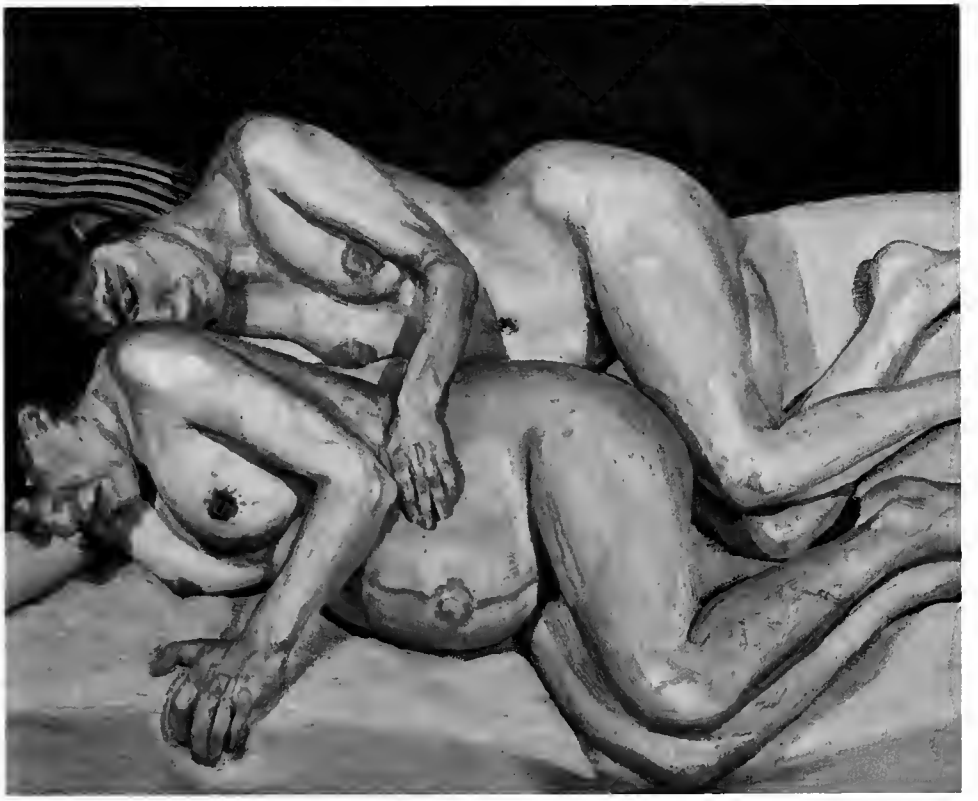
Peter Blake
July 1975

Peter Blake
Ebony Tarzan, 1972
Watercolor
11¾ x 4¾ in. (30 x 12 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

Lucian Freud
Born Berlin, 1922;
to England, 1932
Resident London

Harry Diamond, 1970

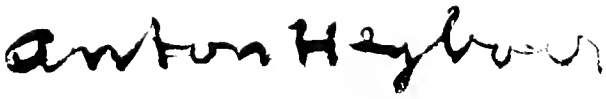
Lucian Freud



Lucian Freud
Annie and Alice, 1975
Oil on canvas
8⅞ x 10⅝ in. (22.6 x 27 cm.)
Anthony D'Offay and
James Kirkman, London

Anton Heyboer
Born Sabang, former
Netherlands East Indies, 1924
Resident Holland

Lotti Voûte

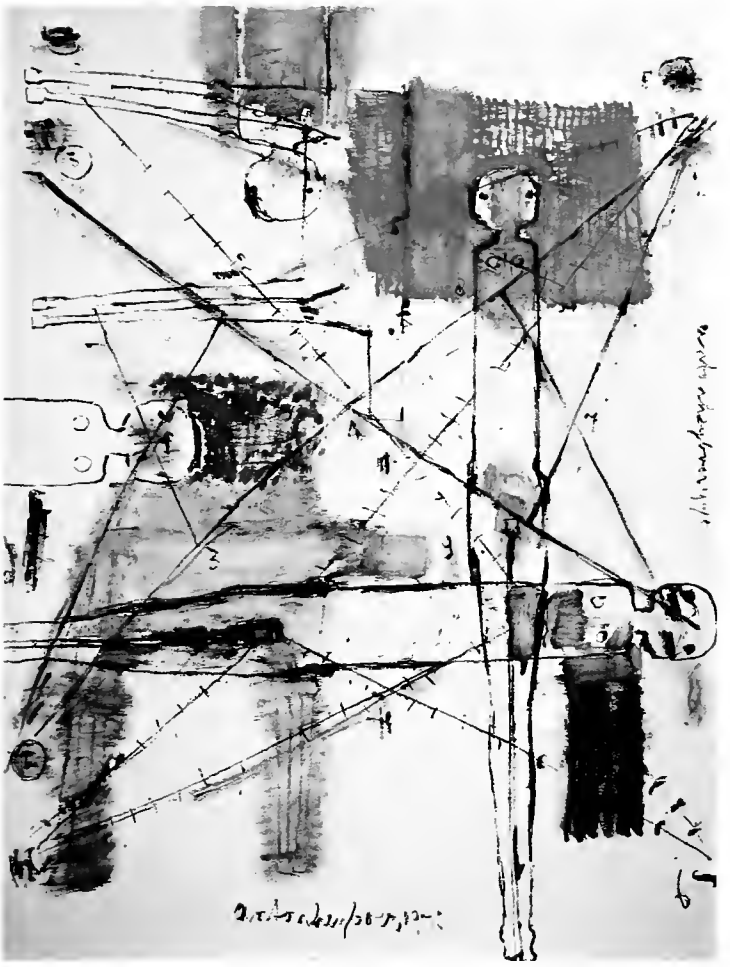


After the war, '40-'45, to act as a normal person for me had no sense, but I found a way out of madness (and the asylum) through creating a system that became a sign.

I do not consider myself an artist.

The fact that some people find beauty in my signs I love; the fact that they want to give money in exchange for them makes it possible for me to live my own abnormal life in freedom.

Anton Heyboer
June 1975



Anton Heyboer
Untitled, 1975
Oil and lacquer on canvas
78¾ x 59 in. (200 x 150 cm.)
Private collection

David Hockney
Born Bradford, Yorkshire, England, 1937
Resident Paris and London

Ronnie Mellen

I have only ever written about my work when requested by museum officials or catalog compilers. I have never thought it necessary as my paintings seem to me to be self-explanatory; indeed, my attitude to titles has always been that if I didn't think of or find a poetic one then a literal description of what is on the paper or canvas would do, example, a drawing of paper flowers, *Flowers Made of Paper and Ink.*

Nevertheless, if a short statement is in order then I can say that my primary interest is in pictures of all kinds — paintings, drawings, photographs, films, prints, etc., but best of all, I like handmade pictures; consequently, I paint them myself. They always have a subject and a little bit of form. Balancing the two makes me, I suppose, a traditional painter. I am in complete sympathy with W. H. Auden's lines:

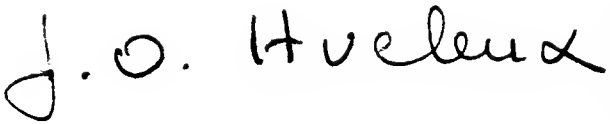
> To me, art's subject is the human clay
> And landscape but a background to a torso
> Cézanne's apples I would give away
> For a small Goya or a Daumier.

David Hockney
July 1975

David Hockney
Two Vases in the Louvre, 1974
Oil on canvas
72½ x 60 in. (184 x 152.4 cm.)
Kasmin Ltd., London

Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Born Chauny, France, 1923
Resident Andresy, France

Jean-Olivier Hucleux



I have always had a desire to paint; it is not always a pleasure, it is simply my work. I paint because, no doubt, I've come into this world for that. I have made myself available. I did not know that I was going to paint. I made these cemeteries, it did not come from me, I merely recognized that that was it. The ideas are more precise for me coming from the outside. I desire them and it is the force of this desire that opens the doors. This shocked me somewhat because a sort of depression came over me. I said to myself: "I don't know why, but I must do it," and now, I understand why it was necessary to do it. I know why I had to paint cemeteries. A cemetery is a silent subject, as is a human being. Besides portraits and cemeteries, I don't see anything much as a subject, and perhaps I see nothing at all.

I arrive in my studio with a photograph, and I leave with a painting — what happened? I made a painting. I did not make a photograph, but a painting which has its own life. A painting must become incarnate and it cannot become incarnate except through a real meaning, the slide serving as a reference. I paint under projection. I set up my painting by drawing the outlines — the outlines in the smallest details, as much as possible — but on a natural scale. It is impossible to have access to the imponderables of a photograph because everything becomes entangled. Then, I begin to paint, to make a base somewhat in monochrome, in half-tones, and on these half-tones, the shadows and the lights. Then, I have to obtain these half-shadows, these half-lights, always these nuances of every detail. When I make a light or a shadow, I know that that's it or is not, it is a sort of intuitive approach, which proves that it is not a photograph, that it is something else.

To work from a photograph is really a discipline in the sense that one must continually efface oneself. Now there is a sort of contradiction there with the fact that I efface myself continually in order to finally intervene, but when I do intervene, I still efface myself. I can spend my entire life on one painting. I have never stopped effacing myself; a painting is never but started, it is never finished.

If I painted from nature, I would make my intelligence intervene and at that point, I would limit myself. I prefer to be engulfed, and to be in a difficult situation. I am very much afraid for myself, because I am an obstacle. To prove my intelligence does not interest me at all, I prefer to abandon myself completely to all possible difficulties.

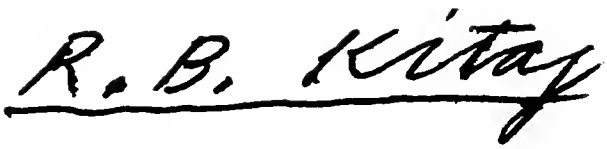
What makes the greatest demand on my time is the technical work. It is then that things happen. It is rather mysterious. I don't know exactly how to speak about it. I am so polarized by my work. I am so abandoned to this hole, to this vacuum.

Painting is as hermetic as playing cards; they are similar — in a single image, one manages to say many things. When you make a painting you really say a number of things to the one who wishes to be silent and listen to the painter. It is a work of restitution which can finally be placed on the plane of metaphysics. It is from that moment that it becomes an element of speed. A painting is something which is launched, which then continues to go very rapidly. Time does not exist anymore for it, and there comes a moment when there is something that I do not understand myself: it is that time exists for those things that one sees in a temporal manner, and time does not exist anymore for an element of restored life. I find that the act of painting is something extraordinary. There is in it an aspect of mysticism. I believe that the act of arriving at painting is as rare as sanctity.

An extract from an interview with Jean-Olivier Hucleux by Jennifer Gough-Cooper and Jacques Caumont, Andresy, France, June 1975

Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Cemetery #6, 1974
Oil on laminated plywood
78¾ x 118 in. (200 x 300 cm.)
Centre National d'Art et
de Culture Georges Pompidou
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

R. B. Kitaj
Born Cleveland, Ohio,
1932; to London, 1957
Resident London
and Catalonia, Spain

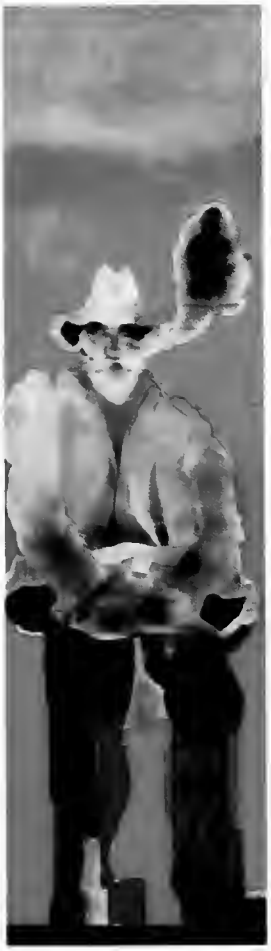


There are great reforms in the air and our art will not remain behind where it is now. The art is ripe for fundamental changes more considerable than the sequence of events introduced into it around 1900; changes more truly revolutionary because more widespread, touching wider instincts among men and women. People say to me: art has always been for the few. Maybe so, but what a challenge! Can it not become the most advanced direction to work to change all that? Our twin masters, art for the few and art for art's sake, are so old-fashioned, so retrograde, so weak now that their terminal clasp on our western societies has to give way to more enriching alliances. It is fascinating to me that the road ahead is blocked among us by so many failures of imagination. I know very few artists who can even imagine the possibility of an art which is both good and more widely social, let alone what such an art might look like. My own problem is that I am haunted by our art having become so hopelessly alienated from everyone else.

There are many forces not taken to be the province of painting which hold my attention and move me to think that the essence of a reformation is at hand, crucial for an art which would align itself for the first time outside its own processes. Some of these are: historical unhappiness and the profound questions of socialism and freedom, goodness and despair.

There is an everlasting instinct to represent people in their concerns, in their plenitude. How to do it well is a great work. Anything less than that is less than that.

R. B. Kitaj
July 1975



R. B. Kitaj
Bill at Sunset, 1973
Oil on canvas
96 x 30 in. (244 x 76 cm.)
Collection of the artist

Antonio Segui
Born Cordoba, Argentina, 1934; to Paris, 1963
Resident Paris

John Lefebre

Antonio Segui
Bulldog in San Vicente, 1975
Charcoal and pastel on canvas
76¾ x 76¾ in. (195 x 195 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

Checklist

I.
Francis Bacon
Two Figures with a Monkey, 1973
Oil on canvas
78 x 58 in. (198 x 147.5 cm.)
Private collection, Switzerland

II.
Francis Bacon
Triptych, May-June 1974
Oil and pastel on canvas
Each panel 78 x 58 in. (198 x 147.5 cm.)
Private collection, Switzerland

III.
Jean Dubuffet
Figure IV, 1974
Vinyl on stratified panel — varnished
48¾ x 62¼ in. (124 x 158 cm.)
Pace Gallery, New York

IV.
Jean Dubuffet
Tricolor Site V, 1974
Vinyl on canvas
76¾ x 51¼ in. (195 x 130 cm.)
Pace Gallery, New York

V.
Jean Dubuffet
Factory Exit, 1974
Vinyl on canvas
83 x 51¼ in. (211 x 130 cm.)
Private collection, Chicago

VI.
Jean Dubuffet
Castilian Landscape with One Figure, 1974
Vinyl on canvas
66½ x 45 in. (169 x 114 cm.)
Galerie Beyeler, Basel

VII.
Jean Hélion
Exorcism, 1973
Acrylic on canvas
63 x 38 in. (160 x 97 cm.)
Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris

VIII.
Jean Hélion
Marketplace Triptych, 1973-74
Acrylic on canvas
78¾ x 110 in. (200 x 280 cm.)
78¾ x 57 in. (200 x 145 cm.)
78¾ x 110 in. (200 x 280 cm.)
Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris

IX.
Joan Miró
Sobreteixim X, 1973
Paint, fabric,
and yarn on woven ground
82½ x 65¾ in. (220 x 167 cm.)
Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

X.
Joan Miró
Sobreteixim XII, 1973
Paint, metal,
and fabric on woven ground
70¾ x 89¼ in. (187 x 227 cm.)
Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York

XI.
Joan Miró
Sobreteixim XVI, 1973
Paint, burlap, yarn,
and fabric on woven ground
74½ x 124 in. (189 x 315 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Zurich

1.
Valerio Adami
The Screen, 1974
Acrylic on canvas
104 x 135 in. (264 x 343 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Paris

2.
Valerio Adami
The Mechanism of Adventure, 1975
Acrylic on canvas
95¾ x 71 in. (243 x 180 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Paris

3.
Valerio Adami
Concerto for Four Hands, 1975
Acrylic on canvas
95¾ x 143¾ in. (243 x 365 cm.)
Galerie Maeght, Paris

4.
Pierre Alechinsky
Antecedents of the Subject, 1969-70
Acrylic on canvas
63 x 77 in. (160 x 196 cm.)
Private collection; courtesy Lefebre Gallery, New York

5.
Pierre Alechinsky
Stay with Us, 1973
Acrylic on canvas
45 x 61 in. (114 x 155 cm.)
Private collection; courtesy Lefebre Gallery, New York

6.
Pierre Alechinsky
Chagrin granat, 1973
Acrylic on canvas
62¼ x 60¾ in. (159 x 154 cm.)
Private collection; courtesy Lefebre Gallery, New York

7.
Pierre Alechinsky
Night Service, 1974
Acrylic on canvas
45 x 60⅝ in. (114 x 154 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

8.
Avigdor Arikha
Hanging Shirt, 1975
Oil on canvas
45¾ x 35 in. (116 x 89 cm.)
Collection of the artist

9.
Avigdor Arikha
Brown Coat, 1975
Oil on canvas
57½ x 35 in. (146 x 89 cm.)
Collection of the artist

10.
Avigdor Arikha
Interior, 1975
Oil on canvas
76¾ x 51¼ in. (195 x 130 cm.)
Collection of the artist

11.
Avigdor Arikha
Anne Seated, 1975
Oil on canvas
57½ x 45 in. (146 x 114 cm.)
Mrs. Anne Arikha, Paris

12.
Eduardo Arroyo
Three Young English Painters Arriving in Paris, 1974
Oil on canvas
51¼ x 63¾ in. (130 x 162 cm.)
H. R. Astrup, Oslo

13.
Eduardo Arroyo
Camilla and Valerio Adami, Full Face, 1974
Oil on canvas
71 x 78¾ in. (180 x 200 cm.)
H. N. Astrup, Oslo

14.
Eduardo Arroyo
Jean Hélion, Escaping, en Route from Pomerania to Paris, Full Face, 1974
Oil on canvas
39½ x 32 in. (100 x 81 cm.)
Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris

15.
Eduardo Arroyo
Jean Hélion, Escaping, en Route from Pomerania to Paris, Rear View, 1974
Oil on canvas
39½ x 32 in. (100 x 81 cm.)
Galerie Karl Flinker, Paris

16.
Frank Auerbach
Head of E.O.W., 1972
Oil on panel
13⅜ x 8⅝ in. (34 x 22 cm.)
Private collection, London

17.
Frank Auerbach
Head of Paula Eyles, 1972
Oil on board
12¾ x 12¼ in. (31.5 x 31.1 cm.)
Private collection, London

18.
Frank Auerbach
Reclining Figure, 1972
Oil on board
15 x 16 in. (38 x 41 cm.)
Mr. and Mrs. Yves-André Istel, New York

19.
Frank Auerbach
Head of E.O.W. — Profile, 1972
Oil on board
20 x 17½ in. (51 x 44 cm.)
Private collection, Switzerland

20.
Frank Auerbach
Gerda Boehm, 1971-73
Oil on board
24 x 28 in. (61 x 71 cm.)
Private collection

21.
Frank Auerbach
Spring Morning — Primrose Hill Study, 1974-75
Oil on board
42 x 54 in. (106.5 x 137 cm.)
Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd.

22.
Frank Auerbach
Head of J.Y.M., 1974
Oil on board
28 x 24 in. (71 x 61 cm.)
Tom Eyton, London

23.
Peter Blake
Pretty Boy Michael Angelo, 1972
Watercolor
8 x 4½ in. (20 x 11 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

24.
Peter Blake
Ebony Tarzan, 1972
Watercolor
11¾ x 4¾ in. (30 x 12 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

25.
Peter Blake
Red Power, 1972
Watercolor
8 x 3⅜ in. (20 x 9 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

26.
Peter Blake
Penny Black, 1972
Watercolor
9 x 4½ in. (23 x 11 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

27.
Peter Blake
The Tuareg, 1972
Watercolor
10 x 5¾ in. (25 x 14 cm.)
Anya and Laura Waddington, London

28.
Lucian Freud
Wasteground with Houses, Paddington, 1970-72
Oil on canvas
62 x 40 in. (167.5 x 101.5 cm.)
Private collection, England

29.
Lucian Freud
Naked Portrait, 1972-73
Oil on canvas
24 x 24 in. (61 x 61 cm.)
The Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London

30.
Lucian Freud
Large Interior, W.9., 1973
Oil on canvas
36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm.)
Devonshire Collection: Lent by His Grace the Duke of Devonshire and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement

31.
Lucian Freud
Naked Figure, 1974
Oil on canvas
8⅝ x 10⅝ in. (23 x 27 cm.)
David Kelley, Worcestershire, England

32.
Lucian Freud
Ali, 1974
Oil on canvas
28 x 28 in. (71 x 71 cm.)
Bernard J. Eastwood, County Down, Northern Ireland

33.
Lucian Freud
Annie and Alice, 1975
Oil on canvas
8⅞ x 10⅝ in. (22.6 x 27 cm.)
Anthony D'Offay and James Kirkman, London

34.
Anton Heyboer
Untitled, 1975
Oil and lacquer on canvas
59 x 78¾ in. (150 x 200 cm.)
Galerie Espace, Amsterdam

35.
Anton Heyboer
Untitled, 1975
Oil and lacquer on canvas
59 x 78¾ in. (150 x 200 cm.)
Private collection

36.
Anton Heyboer
Untitled, 1975
Oil and lacquer on canvas
78¾ x 59 in. (200 x 150 cm.)
Private collection

37.
Anton Heyboer
Untitled, 1975
Oil and lacquer on canvas
59 x 78¾ in. (150 x 200 cm.)
Galerie Espace, Amsterdam

38.
David Hockney
Henry Geldzahler and Christopher Scott, 1968-69
Acrylic on canvas
84¼ x 120 in. (214 x 305 cm.)
Harry N. Abrams Family Collection, New York

39.
David Hockney
Beach Umbrella, 1971
Acrylic on canvas
48 x 35¾ in. (122 x 91 cm.)
Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York

40.
David Hockney
Still Life on a Glass Table, 1971-72
Acrylic on canvas
72 x 108 in. (183 x 274.4 cm.)
Private collection, New York

41.
David Hockney
Two Vases in the Louvre, 1974
Oil on canvas
72½ x 60 in. (184 x 152.4 cm.)
Kasmin Ltd., London

42.
David Hockney
Kerby (after Hogarth) — Useful Knowledge, 1975
Oil on canvas
72 x 60 in. (182.9 x 152.4 cm.)
Lent by the artist

43.
Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Cemetery #5, 1973
Oil on laminated plywood
78¾ x 118 in. (200 x 300 cm.)
Collection of the artist

44.
Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Cemetery #6, 1974
Oil on laminated plywood
78¾ x 118 in. (200 x 300 cm.)
Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou
Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

45.
Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Self-Portrait, 1974
Oil on wood
25½ x 21¼ in. (65 x 53 cm.)
Collection of the artist

46.
Jean-Olivier Hucleux
Portrait of Etienne Martin, 1975
Oil on wood
25½ x 21¼ in. (65 x 53 cm.)
Collection of the artist

47.
R. B. Kitaj
Still (The Other Woman), 1972-73
Oil on canvas
96 x 30 in. (244 x 76 cm.)
Mr. and Mrs. Ian Stoutzker, London

48.
R. B. Kitaj
Bill at Sunset, 1973
Oil on canvas
96 x 30 in. (244 x 76 cm.)
Collection of the artist

49.
R. B. Kitaj
To Live in Peace (The Singers), 1973-74
Oil on canvas
30¼ x 84¼ in. (77 x 214 cm.)
Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd.

50.
R. B. Kitaj
Malta, 1974
Oil on canvas
60 x 96 in. (152 x 244 cm.)
Private collection, Belgium

51.
Antonio Segui
Two Situations in an Oasis, 1970
Acrylic on cardboard
33½ x 43¼ in. (85 x 110 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

52.
Antonio Segui
Portrait of Mr. Lewis, 1970
Oil on two wood panels
33½ x 43¼ in. (85 x 110 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

53.
Antonio Segui
Bulldog in San Vicente, 1975
Charcoal and pastel on canvas
76¾ x 76¾ in. (195 x 195 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

54.
Antonio Segui
Surprised Bulldog, 1975
Charcoal and pastel on canvas
76¾ x 76¾ in. (195 x 195 cm.)
Lefebre Gallery, New York

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Avigdor Arikha, Paris
H. R. Astrup, Oslo
Anthony D'Offay, London
The Duke of Devonshire and the Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement
Bernard J. Eastwood, Northern Ireland
Tom Eyton, London
Jean-Olivier Hucleux, Andresy, France
Mr. and Mrs. Yves-André Istel, New York
David Kelly, Worcestershire, England
James Kirkman, London
R. B. Kitaj, London
Mr. and Mrs. Ian Stoutzker, London
Anya and Laura Waddington, London
Private collections

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