

The 20th Century at Shepherd Gallery

Ching Ho Cheng

Ilka Gedö

Sydney Lazarus

Elizabeth Milleker

George Nama

Judit Reigl

SHEPHERD
W & K
GALLERIES

Reigl 1965

The 20th Century at Shepherd Gallery: Ching Ho Cheng, Ilka Gedö, Sydney Lazarus, Elizabeth Milleker, George Nama, Judit Reigl

October 21 - December 19, 2025

Exhibition organized by
Robert Kashey and David Wojciechowski

Catalog edited and compiled by
Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

**SHEPHERD
W & K
GALLERIES**

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FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION: Judit Reigl, *Flight*, 1965, cat no. 23

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

TECHNICAL NOTES: All measurements are in inches and centimeters, height precedes width. All drawings and paintings are framed. Prices available upon request. All works subject to prior sale.

INTRODUCTION

Shepherd Gallery is known for being champions of nineteenth century works of art, a century in which we explore the artistic changes that occurred within each decade of that period, from neo-classicism through the secessionist movements. The gallery, since its inception in 1966, has been exhibiting contemporary artists that the directors have admired. This tradition of forwarding these artists continues to this day. The six artists featured in this exhibition—Ching Ho Cheng, Ilka Gedő, Sydney Lazarus, Elizabeth Milleker, George Nama, Judit Reigl—have all been shown at Shepherd Gallery, all with published catalogs detailing their work. The works in this exhibition were created in the latter half of the 20th Century and the first two decades of the 21st—from 1947 until 2017—and all lean towards the abstract.

The twenty-five works in *The 20th Century at Shepherd Gallery* all represent the same “gallery taste” as our 19th century programs, with the same affection for the skills and techniques with which these works were executed.

Robert Kashey and David Wojciechowski
2025

Solo Exhibitions at Shepherd Gallery

Ching Ho Cheng

- 1982** *Ching Ho Cheng: New Works on Paper*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, June 9 – July 17, 1982.
- 1985** *Ching Ho Cheng: 20 Drawings*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, February 13 – March 20, 1985.
- 2008** *Ching Ho Cheng: A Retrospective*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, September 25 – November 15, 2008.
- 2015** *Ching Ho Cheng, 1946 – 1989: The Five Elements*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, April 7 – May 9, 2015.
- 2022** *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2022.

Ilka Gedő

- 1995** *Ilka Gedő, 1921 – 1985: Drawings and Pastels*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, Winter 1995 (November 21 – December 29, 1995).

Sidney Lazarus

- 2015** *Sidney Lazarus, 1912 – 1973: Fantastical and Visionary Works*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Winter 2015 (October 29 – December 19, 2015).

Elizabeth Milleker

- 2004** *Elizabeth Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005.
- 2005** *“The Cloak of Hectate”: Works on Paper by Elizabeth Milleker*, North Ford Bank, New York, organized by Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, May 5, 2005.

George Nama

- 2001** *Von Teufeln Devil's Pageant: Poems by Alfred Brendel with Etchings by George Nama*, Shepherd and Derom Galleries, New York, Spring 2001 (March 28 – May 25, 2001).
- 2003** *Dreizehen Engel = Thirteen Angels: Poems by Alfred Brendel, Etchings, Drawings, and Sculptures by George Nama*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, Spring 2003 (April 1 – April 30, 2003).
- 2006** *George Nama, Charles Simic, Alfred Brendel, Yves Bonnefoy: Two Portfolios of Etchings, Drawings and Sculpture*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, February 28 – April 1, 2006.
- 2010** *George Nama: Gouaches & Sculptures in Preparation for "Drawing the Bow (den Bogen spannen)": Poems by Alfred Brendel*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, October 22, 2010 – January 15, 2011.
- 2013** *George Nama, Fleeting Images: A Survey, 1958 – 2008*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2013 (June 4 – July 26, 2013).
- 2016** *George Nama, Works 1958 – 1978*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2016 (June 21 – August 26, 2016).

Judit Reigl

- 2013** *Judit Reigl: Entrance–Exit (1986 – 89)*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Fall 2013 (October 30 – December 14, 2013).
- 2013** *Judit Reigl: Entrée–Sortie*, W&K Fine Art, Vienna, October 8 – November 16, 2013.
- 2018** *Judit Reigl: Dance of Death*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Fall 2018 (September 25 – October 20, 2018).

CATALOG

CHENG, Ching Ho (Havana, Cuba 1946 – 1989 New York)

American School

Ching Ho Cheng was born to a highly respected Chinese diplomatic family stationed in Havana, Cuba in 1946. His father moved the family to New York in 1951, settling in Kew Gardens, Queens. In 1964, Cheng started his first year at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, working under painters Nicholas Krushenick (1929 – 1999), Richard Anuskiewicz (1930 – 2020), and Michael Goldberg (1924 – 2007). It was during these years that Cheng became interested in the teachings of Tao-te-ching and Taoism. After graduating in 1968, he started to produce work that



FIGURE 1. Ching Ho Cheng working in his apartment in the Chelsea Hotel, 1979. Photo by Barry Schapiro. Image courtesy of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2022.

would become part of the first of his four major artistic periods, what he referred to as “Epic” painting, also called “Psychedelics.”¹ This period lasted from 1969 until 1973 when he shifted his focus away from “explosions”² and towards “subtlety.”³ In an interview in 1977, Cheng reflected on this transition, saying, “Once I was attracted by ‘Epic’ painting, but now that does not interest me. I find great beauty in very simple things.”⁴ The next decade (1973 – 1982) was what art historian Gert Schiff (1926 – 1990)⁵ called a “process of gradual purification.”⁶ This second period is known as the “Gouache” period, which focused on everyday objects such as matches, light bulbs, and peaches (see figure 1). By the end of this period, Cheng had distilled his work down to the essence of light and shadow. The third period, known as the “Torn Works,” spanned from 1982 until 1986 when Cheng started to experiment with torn gessoed paper and iron and copper powder. These latest works, dating from 1986 until his

death in 1989, marked Cheng's fourth and final period, the "Alchemical Works."

Cheng's art was reviewed during his lifetime in publications such as *Art in America*, *Arts Magazine*, *ArtForum*, *Opus International*, and *The New York Times*, where it impressed upon many in the art world his expert skill, fresh eye, and, according to Henry Geldzahler (1935 – 1994),⁷ his "fascination with extreme states of perception."⁸ The brilliance of Ching Ho Cheng lies not with his technical ability alone, it is his "way of seeing" as well that set him apart from his peers and that continues to amass critical attention to this day because Cheng left his work open to various readings. In 1980, he wrote, "The meaning is for the beholder to discover."⁹ Thus, the viewer is able to interpret these works based on their own knowledge and experience. Similarly, Cheng believed that reaching an audience unfamiliar with art was a privilege: "one of my greatest pleasures is to touch people who know nothing about art."¹⁰

Making art was for Cheng part of his life force. Without that ability, he would have felt physically and emotionally debilitated. He related his capability to create art to his biological potential to create life, "To me my paintings are my testicles. If I didn't paint, I'd feel castrated. Because I feel really strong when I do something that I think is beautiful. It makes me feel very strong inside."¹¹ In around 1973, Cheng turned to his sister and proclaimed that without the ability to paint he would lose the will to live.¹² Cheng's painting embodied who the artist was. The fervor with which he created has determined how his work is remembered to this day.

In the years since his death, the artistic life and work of Ching Ho Cheng continue to garner further reappraisal and reconsideration. In June of 2021, on the fortieth anniversary of the first report published by the



FIGURE 2. Sybao and Ching Ho Cheng on the way to Studio 54, New York, circa 1978. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2022.

US Centers for Disease Control to mention an illness—which would shortly be defined as AIDS—, David Zwirner exhibited a series of simultaneous exhibitions under the title *More Life* that featured eight different artists at various international locations including New York. Each of these exhibitions represented artists, including Ching Ho Cheng,¹³ "whose lives were cut short by HIV/AIDS-related complications during approximately the first twenty years of the epidemic."¹⁴ In 2022, on the 100th anniversary of the Phillips Collection of Washington D.C., the museum asked 12 artists to "reimagine the Phillips centennial logo in their own style."¹⁵ For the month of October 2022, the artist Julia Chon, also known as Kimchi Juice, included illustrations of five Asian American artists in her redesign of the Phillips logo, among them Ching Ho Cheng.¹⁶ BANK, a Shanghai-based gallery, has been exhibiting Cheng's work at international art fairs since 2023. In May 2025 after acquiring premises in New York they organized *Ching Ho Cheng: Tracing Infinity*, an exhibition celebrating Cheng's window

gouaches from the 1970s and 80s.¹⁷ The Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Massachusetts will launch the first retrospective of Cheng's work at a major institution in 2027.

Each year Cheng acquires further attention for which one must thank his sister Sybao Cheng-Wilson, the director of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate, who has promoted Cheng's work with great determination and purpose since 1989 (see figure 2). The Shepherd W & K Galleries are proud to once again champion Cheng with the cooperation of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate as we have over the last 40 years. Since 1982 Shepherd Gallery has organized five solo exhibitions of Ching Ho Cheng in 1982, 1985, 2008, 2015, and 2022.¹⁸ His work has also appeared in a number of group exhibitions at the gallery in the last several decades.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 Sybao Cheng-Wilson, "Infinity in a Peach Pit: My Brother's Quest for the Eternal," in *More Life: Ching Ho Cheng*, exh. cat., curator Simon Wu (Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2021), 5, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/s/CATALOGUE-2021>.
- 2 Ching Ho Cheng, quoted in Gert Schiff, "Torn Together," *Artforum International* 24, no. 5 (January 1986): 82, <https://www.artforum.com/print/198601/ching-ho-cheng-s-unrepeatable-abstractions-35125>.
- 3 Ching Ho Cheng, quoted in David Rattray, "Het psychorealisme van Ching Ho Cheng," *Bres* 61 (December 1976): 74, translated and republished in its entirety on the Ching Ho Cheng Estate website, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/bres>.
- 4 Ching Ho Cheng quoted in Jaakov Kohn, "A Conversation: Ching Ho Cheng," *The SoHo Weekly News* (January 27, 1977): 21–23, republished in its entirety on the Ching Ho Cheng Estate website, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/artist-interview>.
- 5 Gert Schiff wrote the 1972 *catalogue raisonné* on Johann Heinrich Füssli. His book *Images of Horror and Fantasy* (1979) was a critical and psychological study of nineteenth and twentieth century fine art that dealt with the unease and disquietudes of the modern age. He also focused on the final years of Pablo Picasso, then an understudied and often dismissed area of Picasso's *oeuvre*. After working in the New York University Art History department at Washington Square for a number of years he was recruited to work at the Institute of Fine Arts in 1974 where he was later named Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities.
- 6 Schiff, "Torn Together," 82.
- 7 Henry Geldzahler was a prominent American curator and art critic throughout the late 20th century. He started his career as curator of American art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1966, Geldzahler carried out his duties as the United States commissioner to the Venice Biennale. He also served as the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for New York City under Mayor Edward I. Koch from 1977 until 1982. Geldzahler was a fierce advocate of contemporary art.
- 8 Henry Geldzahler, "Studio Visit: Ching Ho Cheng," *Contemporanea* 1, no. 4 (November/December 1988): 84, republished in its entirety on the Ching Ho Cheng Estate website, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/contemporanea>.
- 9 Ching Ho Cheng, April 7, 1980, quoted in Everson Museum of Art, "Exhibitions - Ching Ho Cheng: Intimate Illuminations," *Everson Museum of Art Bulletin* (June 1980). Emphasis mine.
- 10 Ching Ho Cheng quoted in Gregory Millard, "Forward," in *Ching Ho Cheng: New Paintings 1978-1979*, exh. cat. (GHJ Graphics Inc, 1978), n.p., republished in its entirety on the Ching Ho Cheng Estate website, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/catalog-forward>. Gregory B. Millard was a noted poet and playwright who was appointed assistant commissioner for program services in the Department of Cultural affairs by Mayor Edward I. Koch. Millard also worked on the radio and on TV in Washington. He was the general manager and cofounder of the WPFW-FM radio-station starting in 1977. For a Washington TV station, WTOP-TV, Millard wrote and narrated "For My People"

a documentary about poets in the Harlem renaissance. Millard's documentary won the George Foster Peabody award in 1975.

11 Ching Ho Cheng quoted in Kohn, "A Conversation: Ching Ho Cheng," 21-23.

12 Sybao Cheng-Wilson, "Remembering Ching Ho Cheng," interview by Simon Wu, *Public* 33, no 65, Devotion – Today's Future Becomes Tomorrow's Archive, guest ed. (June 2022): 6, republished in its entirety on the Ching Ho Cheng Estate website, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/s/DEVOTION.pdf>.

13 *More Life: Ching Ho Cheng*, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, September 17, 2021 – October 23, 2021, <https://www.davidzwirner.com/exhibitions/2021/more-life/ching-ho-cheng>.

14 David Zwirner Gallery, "More Life," press release, May 10, 2021, <https://www.davidzwirner.com/exhibitions/2021/more-life/press-release>.

15 The Phillips Collection, "Our Logo Reimagined," press release, 2022, <https://www.phillipscollection.org/our-logo-re-imagined>.

16 Ibid.

17 *Ching Ho Cheng: Tracing Infinity*, BANK NYC, New York, May 2 – June 20, 2025, <https://bankmabsociety.com/exhibitions/106-ching-ho-cheng-tracing-infinity/>.

18 Solo exhibitions at Shepherd Gallery: *Ching Ho Cheng: New Works on Paper*, 1982; *Ching Ho Cheng: 20 Drawings*, 1985; *Ching Ho Cheng: A Retrospective*, 2008; *Ching Ho Cheng: The Five Elements*, 2015; *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, 2022. Visit <https://shepherdgallery.com/> for more information.

1. **CHENG, Ching Ho** (Havana, Cuba 1946 – 1989 New York)
American School

UNTITLED (PRISM SERIES), 1982

Charcoal and pastel on paper. 21 ½ × 30 in. (54.6 × 76.2 cm). Ching Ho Cheng Estate label affixed at the lower right corner on verso of frame: *CHING HO CHENG* | www.chinghocheng.com | *Chelsea Hotel 222 W23 Street NYC 10011*.

PROVENANCE:

Ching Ho Cheng Estate.

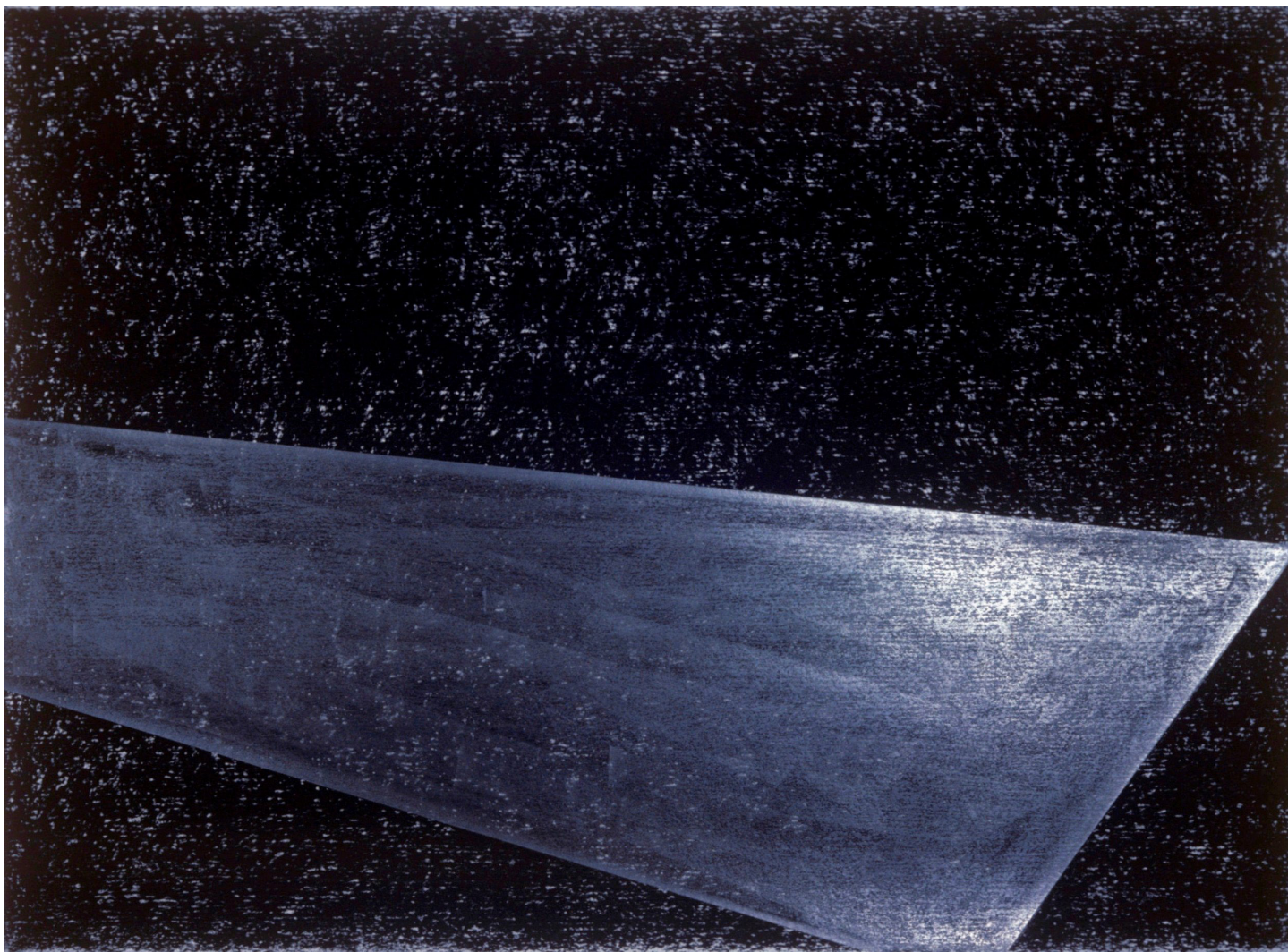
EXHIBITIONS:

- 2008** *Ching Ho Cheng: A Retrospective*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, September 25 – November 15, 2008.
- 2015** *Ching Ho Cheng, 1946 – 1989: The Five Elements*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York Spring 2015 (April 7 – May 9, 2015), cat. no. 14.
- 2022** *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2022, cat. no. 4.

LITERATURE:

- 2015** *Ching Ho Cheng, 1946 – 1989: The Five Elements*, exh. cat. (Shepherd W&K Galleries, 2015), n.p., cat. no. 14, ill., <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/chingcatalog.pdf>.
- 2022** Kaitlin Anne Vervoort, *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, exh. cat. (Shepherd W&K Galleries, 2022), 22-25, 33, cat. no. 4, ill., <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ching-ho-cheng.pdf>.

By the time Cheng graduated from the Cooper Union in 1968, the world was on the brink of major change. How we understood ourselves and our place in this universe was expanding daily. In 1969, the United States made the first of many successful attempts to reach the moon. For the first time a human being walked on its surface, and we looked at the Earth in an entirely new light. The years that followed did not dampen this effect. We transformed it into an understanding of space as the new frontier for scientific exploration and within that the hopes of many were firmly placed, including those of Ching Ho Cheng. The romance of space exploration influenced every facet



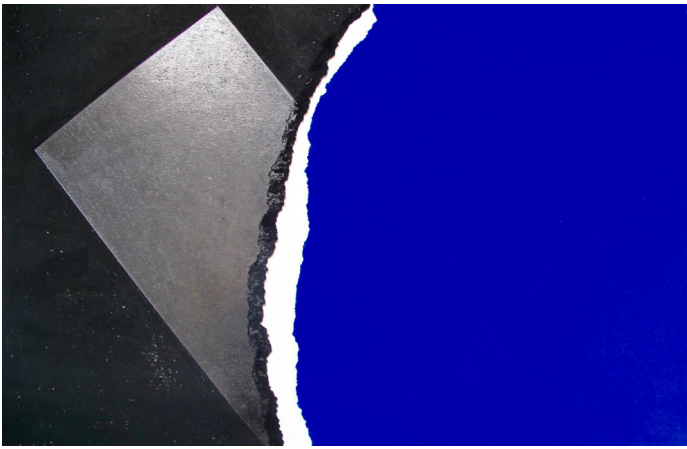


FIGURE 1. Ching Ho Cheng, *Untitled (Blue and Black Torn Work)*, 1985. Image courtesy of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2025.

of society, including the fine arts.

Evocations of space now appeared throughout Cheng's oeuvre, and it did not stop as the initial fervor surrounding the first moon landing finally abated. In the early 1980's—the years preceding the torn works—Cheng developed a small series of works known as the *Prism Series* and the *UFO Series*. Elements of these works carried over to subsequent works including the blue and black (see FIGURE 1) or green and black torn works where large metallic monoliths sliced through charcoal-colored horizons. As seen in the present work, *Untitled (Prism Series)*, Cheng used a particular method to achieve the speckled texture in the areas of charcoal and graphite. To accomplish it Cheng used a technique called *frottage*, deriving from the French word for “rubbing.” In these works,

Cheng used a rough surface against which he placed the paper—in this case the plaster walls of the Chelsea Hotel—and then applied the charcoal and graphite medium.¹ Thus, the surface effect of the paper took on the textured appearance of the rough plaster wall. This method imbued the charcoal area with a sense of depth and endless expansion. On the other hand, the graphite monoliths gain a physicality that the areas representing space definitively lack. This effect varies from work to work, and in the later blue and black torn works, the monoliths appear far denser and more mottled and are positively erupting from the surface (see FIGURE 2 - 3 respectively). The striking graphite monoliths that cut across the dense and endless black expanse have a certain luminosity that reveal Cheng's lifelong interest in light, the eternal, and the infinite. Cheng intentionally creates a surface that interacts with light in a playful and evocative way. He wrote, “I am trying to depict the illumination. The light will continue. It is eternal.”²

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort



FIGURE 2. Ching Ho Cheng, Detail of *Untitled (Prism Series)*, 1982.



FIGURE 3. Ching Ho Cheng, Detail of *Untitled (Blue and Black Torn Series)*, 1985.

ENDNOTES

¹ Gert Schiff, "Torn Together," *Artforum International* 24, no. 5 (January 1986): 82, <https://www.artforum.com/print/198601/ching-ho-cheng-s-unrepeatable-abstractions-35125>.

² Ching Ho Cheng, quoted in George Millard, "Forward," in *Ching Ho Cheng: New Paintings 1978 – 1979*, exh. cat. (Gloria Cortella Gallery, 1978), n.p.

2. **CHENG, Ching Ho** (Havana, Cuba 1946 – 1989 New York)
American School

UNTITLED (BLUE & BLACK TORN WORK), 1985

Charcoal, graphite, and blue pastel on torn rag paper. 14 × 21 in. (35.6 × 53.3 cm). Inscribed in black ink on verso of frame in lower left corner: *For Gert*. Dated and signed in black ink on verso of frame in lower right corner: '85 | CHC

PROVENANCE:

Estate of Professor Gert Schiff (1926 – 1990), until 1990;

Ching Ho Cheng Estate.

EXHIBITIONS:

2008 *Ching Ho Cheng: A Retrospective*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, September 25 – November 15, 2008.

2015 *Ching Ho Cheng, 1946 – 1989: The Five Elements*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York Spring 2015 (April 7 – May 9, 2015), cat. no. 12.

2022 *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2022, cat. no. 6.

LITERATURE:

2015 *Ching Ho Cheng, 1946 – 1989: The Five Elements*, exh. cat. (Shepherd W&K Galleries, 2015), n.p., cat. no. 12, ill., <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/chingcatalog.pdf>.

2022 Kaitlin Anne Vervoort, *Ching Ho Cheng: The Minute with the Infinite, Evocations of the Artist*, exh. cat. (Shepherd W&K Galleries, 2022), 24, 30-34, cat. no. 6, ill., <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ching-ho-cheng.pdf>.

In 1982, after working on a drawing for several days, I tore it up in exasperation. Unwittingly, I made the discovery that the spontaneous or accidental gesture has a powerful impact of its own, a kind of dissonance in the order of things. Since that time I have been tearing paper to reconstruct a series of works... Nature is my key inspiration, not to imitate or document it, but to be aware of its inherent duality, the creating and destructive cyclical forces that are at its innermost core. If I could be imbued with the raw and tumultuous energy of nature while tearing, I could also invoke its power of renewal.¹

Ching Ho Cheng, after 1988



While Cheng's torn series first developed out of a moment of serendipity, many were created with a specific idea in mind. For instance, in the 1985 *Study for "Chasm"* (see FIGURE 1), Cheng visualized a final stage of his design. After this first stage of planning, he introduced the risk of chance to play a crucial part. While he could generally map out where he desired the paper to tear, the paper could not be entirely controlled. The act of tearing the paper risked upsetting and at times dismantling the direction Cheng wanted to take, and yet it was these moments of random and unforeseen consequences that excited Cheng the most. For him, the dichotomy between design and nature, planning and chance, and the intentional and unintentional in his work was a microcosm of the larger "primordial drama."²

Cheng describes his torn works as such: "Tearing paper is a gestural act reflecting a moment in time. Inadvertently, there is always the danger of tearing a drawing to shreds, but when I'm willing to risk losing it all, I can chance discovering the resonance of accidental or dissonant form. Tearing excites me when I have pushed it to the edge of the precipice, but it manages to strike a delicate balance there. These works on paper are inspired by the mysterious helix of creating and destruction. I tear paper, and make these drawings to reaffirm a primordial drama, the ever-recurring cycle of birth, life, death, and regeneration. It is my intention that process and metaphor circumnavigate the same sphere."³

Although Cheng could certainly start anew

if the tear did not correspond to his preparatory drawings, he rarely did, for it was that moment of chance that fueled his creative process. *After* tearing the paper Cheng applied the pastel, charcoal, and graphite.⁴ Finally, he would unite the pieces of hand colored paper, allowing the white ground to act both as a part of and background to the amalgamated whole where it "asserts its autonomy and infuses the interstices with light and energy."⁵ At times the white

ground represents a small rift in space that doesn't detract from the mass of parts (as seen in the present black and blue torn work *Untitled* from 1985). Other works have a deep chasm which disrupts the optical field (as seen in the *Study for "Chasm"*). According to Schiff, "The fringes of the individual pieces of paper may be fitted together so tightly that the image appears as a single complex, torn and recomposed, but more often the cleavages are so wide that they disrupt any continuity of the parts."⁶

Not all the torn works were blue and black. Cheng also created green and black versions. In the green and black torn works, Cheng

saw the juxtaposition of regeneration and fertility (in the form of the green mass) with infinite depth, the cosmos, and endless dimensions (represented by black) in which a graphite discoid shape hurdles through time unknown.⁷ The blue mass in the blue and black torn series embodies the "color of infinity, of the spirit not of the sky."⁸ Schiff described the series in the following way: "One piece colored in blue or green pastel is usually juxtaposed with one or several others

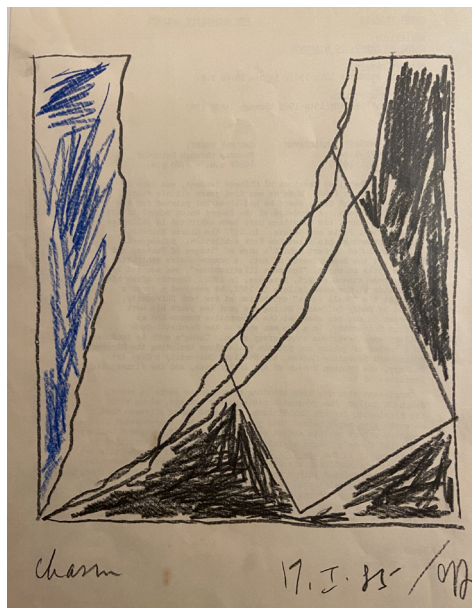


FIGURE 1. Ching Ho Cheng, *Study for "Chasm,"* 1985. Pastel and charcoal on the back of a 1985 Shepherd Gallery Press Release announcing the exhibition "Ching Ho Cheng: 20 drawings." 8 ½ × 11 in. (20.6 × 27.9 cm). Private Collection, New York.

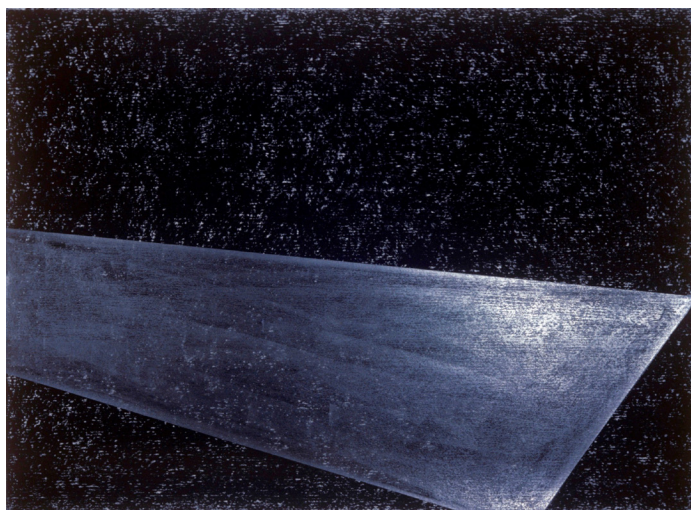


FIGURE 2. Ching Ho Cheng, *Untitled (Prism Series)*, 1982. Image courtesy of the Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2025.

largely blacked in with charcoal but with sharp-edged or elliptical shapes also rubbed in vigorously in various layers of graphite. Sometimes color is omitted, and the drama unfolds in the interaction between the metallic graphite, the velvety charcoal, and the white ground.”⁹

In the present work, *Untitled (Blue and Black Torn Work)*, the areas of pastel, charcoal, and graphite are intense in hue and densely applied; so much so that the pastel bleeds through the heavy-weight rag paper to which it is administered. The charcoal is also thoroughly applied but in a manner that differs slightly from the areas covered in blue pastel. It is less opaque than the area of blue pastel but still offers the viewer a mass of blackness in which one can find themselves lost in contemplation, lost in the endlessness of space. On top of the “velvety charcoal”¹⁰ sits a rectangular mass of graphite. With its crisp lines and textured surface, the shape has the appearance of real weight and dimension. To achieve this particular texture seen in both the areas of charcoal and graphite Cheng placed the paper against a rough plaster wall and then applied the charcoal or graphite. This created a *frottage*, a textured appearance, as seen in both the present work, *Untitled (Black and Blue Torn Work)* from 1985,

and *Untitled (Prism Series)* from 1982 (see FIGURE 2) “so that cracks or traces of scraper and smoother appear on their surfaces as light-absorbent reliefs.”¹¹ In doing so Cheng created a series of multidimensional abstract works with layers of meaning associated with the colors and forms present in each work.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ching Ho Cheng, "Part III. Comments on Interrupted Text and Grotto (Rust) works," Ching Ho Cheng Estate, after 1988, n.p. Emphasis mine.
- 2 Ching Ho Cheng, "Comments on Torn Series," Ching Ho Cheng Estate, n.d.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Gert Schiff, "Torn Together," *Artforum International* 24, no. 5 (January 1986): 84, <https://www.artforum.com/print/198601/ching-ho-cheng-s-unrepeatable-abstractions-35125>.
- 5 Ibid., 82.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Sybao Cheng-Wilson, "Infinity in a Peach Pit: My Brother's Quest for the Eternal," in *More Life: Ching Ho Cheng*, exh. cat., curator Simon Wu (Ching Ho Cheng Estate, 2021), 6, <https://www.chinghocheng.com/s/CATALOGUE-2021>.
- 8 Schiff, "Torn Together," 84.
- 9 Ibid., 82.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.

GEDŐ, Ilka (Budapest 1921 – 1985 Budapest)**Hungarian School**

Ilka Gedő was an artist of singular brilliance. Over the course of her career, she followed her own artistic vision and rejected current trends and artistic philosophies that focused on abstraction, automatism, and (later) minimalism. She was, as art historian István Hajdu writes, an “*irritation*” for the mainstream.¹ She was a creator of figurative and evocative art that went *à rebours*. When she was pressured to compromise her artistic compass by her contemporaries, she refused and retreated within herself only to reemerge 15 years later with a vibrancy and unquenchable thirst for creation.

Drawing regularly from the age of 11,² Ilka Gedő sought formal art instruction at the age of eighteen. With the interruption of the war, her education was neither coherent nor continuous. She chose small private schools and instructors over the typical Academy instruction. She attended the private school of Tibor Gallé (1896 – 1944) in 1939, took lessons from Viktor Erdei (1906 – 1945), a family friend, from 1939 to 1942; studied at the private school of István Örkényi Strasser (1911 – 1944) from 1942 to 1943; and enrolled at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts in 1945.³ Rejecting the traditional path of art education attending the Academy, Gedő spent only one semester there before withdrawing.

From 1944, Gedő's work reflects the experience she had to endure as a young Jewish woman in Budapest. In the summer of 1944, at age 23, she was forced to move into a so-called “yellow-star house” at 26 *Erzsébet körút* with her family. Along with 200,000 other Jews forced to live in the walled-off ghetto in the middle of Budapest, Gedő lived in cramped quarters with little to no drinking water, food, or medication.⁴ She had only her notebook and pencil to occupy her time. While in the Ghetto, Gedő produced drawings based on her observations of her companions and surroundings.⁵ No violence or death is shown, instead she reveals the lives of everyday people under occupation, with all the hopelessness and isolation that that entails. On January 18, 1945, the eastern part of the city, Pest, was liberated by the Red Army allowing Gedő to leave the seclusion of the yellow-star house and return to her former home located in Fillér street.⁶

In 1946-47, with the recommendation of the Budapest Free Trade-Union of Artists, Gedő was able to visit the Ganz factory which was under Soviet-style Communist management. The Ganz Factory, situated at the *Márgit*

körut in Budapest, was a large enterprise, producing elements for electrical engineering in one plant, and metal parts for machines and tools in another plant. In the late 1940's after the war, it offered an educational program, organized by a liberally minded engineer. Ilka Gedő was welcomed on the premises to sit and draw, even if the result did not correspond to the official image of the worker. At a time when government propaganda proclaimed a bright future for the communist worker, her pastels of shadowy workers in a mysterious light, bent over tables or sinks, dotted with flecks of gold, did not impress the official comrades.⁷

Following the Ganz factory series, Gedő produced two simultaneous bodies of work: self-portraits and tables. The subjects are simple yet provocative. Using a style she first developed in the Ganz series, her work intensified, as if she were searching for her subject. The object of portrayal, be it a self-portrait or a simple table, is encircled with nervously vibrating lines emanating from its center. Her lines are reminiscent of Giacometti (whose work she discovered only later). The present drawings, *Table, no. 2* (cat. no. 5), *Self-Portrait in Pregnancy (Green Dress)* (cat. no. 3), and *Self-Portrait in Pregnancy (Blue Dress)* (cat. no. 4) all come from this period.

In August 1949, after revisiting the introduction to the catalog of the *Vajda Lajos festőművész emlékkiállítás* (Memorial Exhibition of Lajos Vajda) at Alkotás Művészház (Alkotás Gallery) in Budapest by the art critic and theorist Ernő Kállai (1890 – 1954) and reading an old issue of *Szép Szó* (*Beautiful Word*), Gedő wrote a heartfelt plea for “absolution”⁸ and guidance to Kállai. The letter was the second of its kind sent to Kállai.⁹ In it she desperately wanted to know, “why does modern art exclude representation?...This question has been tormenting me for years.”¹⁰ For

Gedő, figuration was a critical part of her practice. From portraits of inmates at the “yellow star houses” and workers at the Ganz factory, to self-portraits, to tables, she did not heed the call of abstraction in the way that her contemporaries in what her husband Endre Biró (1919 – 1988) called “the Lajos Szabó’s circle”¹¹ did. They believed that “the purpose of art was not depiction, but creation, understood in its most abstract sense: the creation of signs and symbols, rather than the portrayal of visible things.”¹² She did not believe in absolutes and held firm in the opinion that representational art had a place in modern art. In her 1949 letter to Kállai, Gedő wrote, “Therefore, according to these people, I belong to those whom the Vajda catalogue describes as weak, cowardly and lazy for existing on such a level of intellectual tension, as is called, for want of a better word, abstract art.”¹³ After years of questioning, self-doubt, and criticism by her fellow artists, all coinciding with her own struggles of identity, the battle between motherhood and artistic pursuits, she decided that her only course of action was retreat. By 1950, Gedő had withdrawn from her art practice completely, isolating herself intellectually and artistically. She kept in contact with only a few members of her artistic circle, Lajos Szabó (1902 – 1967), Attila Kotányi (1924 – 2003), Endre Bálint (1914 – 1986), and Béla Veszelszky (1905 – 1977).¹⁴ During her hiatus, she primarily devoted herself to the research of color theory, eventually translating texts by Goethe’s *Zur Farbenlehre* [*Theory of Colors*] into Hungarian, adding her own notes of analysis and recreations of the color charts.¹⁵

In the fall of 1964, Ilka Gedő returned to the world of artistic creation. She started slowly, creating caricatures and sketches of her friends and surroundings.¹⁶ Just a few months later in 1965, incorporating the color theory she devoted over

15 years to, Gedő took up oil painting, a part of her career that lasted for 20 years, until her death in 1985, producing more than 150 paintings¹⁷ and thousands of color studies.¹⁸

In 1995, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, Shepherd Gallery launched a solo exhibition of Ilka Gedő's pastels and drawings, focusing on those done up until 1949, especially her tables and the Ganz factory series.¹⁹

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 István Hajdu, "Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő," in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985): Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents*, ed. István Hajdu and Dávid Bíró (Gondolat Kiadó, 2003), 6.
- 2 Ibid., 13.
- 3 "Biography of Ilka Gedő," in "...Half Picture, Half Veil...": *Works on Paper by Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, exh. cat., ed. Marianna Koloszáry (Museum of Fine Arts – Hungarian National Gallery, 2021), 20.
- 4 Péter György and Gábor Pataki, "The Paradoxy [sic] of Artistic Conception: The Art of Ilka Gedő," in *Gedő Ilka művészete, 1921 – 1985 = The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, trans. Suzy Mészöly and Dávid Bíró (Új Művészet Alapítvány, 1997), 19-20.
- 5 A selection of these drawings from her sketchbooks are now in the collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum in Jerusalem.
- 6 István Hajdu, "The Work of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)," in *Gender, Memory, and Judaism*, ed. Judit Gazsi, Andrea Pető, and Zsuzsanna Toronyi (Balassi Kiadó, 2007), 154.
- 7 Hajdu, "Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő," 17.
- 8 Ilka Gedő to Ernő Kállai, Budapest, August 2, 1949, in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, 218.
- 9 Gedő first wrote to Kállai in early 1943, but he did not have the time to spare. Kállai was at this time involved in the organization of the *Vajda Lajos festőművész emlékkiállítás* (Memorial Exhibition of Lajos Vajda) at Alkotás Művészház in Budapest.
- 10 Ilka Gedő to Ernő Kállai, Budapest, August 2, 1949, in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, 218.
- 11 Endre Bíró, "Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artistic Career," in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, 247.
- 12 László Baán, "The Power of Depiction," in "...Half Picture, Half Veil...," 6.
- 13 Ilka Gedő to Ernő Kállai, Budapest, August 2, 1949, in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)*, 218-219.
- 14 Hajdu, "Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő," 23.
- 15 Ibid., 22.
- 16 Ibid., 25.
- 17 "Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985)," Janos Gat Gallery, accessed October 8, 2025, <https://janosgatgallery.com/artists/ilka-gedo.html>.
- 18 György and Pataki, "The Paradoxy [sic] of Artistic Conception: The Art of Ilka Gedő," 24.
- 19 *Ilka Gedő, 1921 – 1985: Drawings and Pastels*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, Winter 1995 (November 21 – December 29, 1995).

3. **GEDŐ, Ilka** (Budapest 1921 – 1985 Budapest)
Hungarian School

SELF-PORTRAIT IN PREGNANCY (Green Dress), circa 1947

Pastel on vellum paper. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (34.7 × 20 cm).

PROVENANCE:

Estate of Ilka Gedő;

Private Collection, New York.

In the years leading up to 1946, Gedő pursued art without a second thought. It was a compulsion and a driving force that guided her through the years of childhood and coming-of-age, and the uncertainty, oppression, and trauma from war and antisemitism as an adult. Gender did not factor into her life or artistry. In her diary from 1951, she writes, “my ‘gender’ remained undefined for an unpredictably long time. All the inner movements that were related to artistic work in my life, all the skills, processes, moods, emotions and raptures were the skills, processes, etc. of being genderless.”¹ Upon meeting Endre Bíró (1919 – 1988), that changed: “With my relationship to E[ndre] this undefined something, this gender role had become immensely more pronounced... Now I am experimenting with an explanation that could clarify the situation even to a psychoanalyst: there is an unbridgeable gap between artistic work and femininity.”²

Among Gedő's self-portraits, those during pregnancy are most elucidating to the internal struggle that raged within her. In the present two portraits, *Self-Portrait in Pregnancy (Green Dress)* (cat. no. 3) and *Self-Portrait in Pregnancy (Blue Dress)* (cat. no. 4), her face is almost completely obscured, rendering the figure virtually anonymous; pregnancy is the one definable quality, the ultimate betrayal of her gender. The conflict between being a woman, especially a mother, and an artist was most acute within her psyche. In one of her journals from around 1951, she writes, “I either become a good painter or a punched paper for some body exercise. Which of these two options should I choose. The answer is very simple: you should be both a good painter and a good Berceuse (nurse). You cannot be good at one without the other. That is what wise people usually say, but is that not somewhat wishy-



washy? Nevertheless, I may ask where my message is. Maybe it can still be found.” She clearly wants to be both but is skeptical of the claim of these so-called “wise people.” Gedő goes on to say, “What if this whole artistic effort was fictitious? Maybe drawing was just an excuse to hide away from people. What could be the message of a woman painter? What are its specifics? To be a painter is a profession whose bodily and spiritual traditions have been handed down over the centuries by men since the time Egyptian pyramids were built. Should I take over the way of life, the craftsmanship and the world outlook from these men? Of course I should, but then also their geniality.”³ Her drive to pursue art was confounded by her questions of the use and practicality of being a woman artist. In “Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő,” art historian István Hajdu eloquently wrote, “In the drawings made towards the end of this three-year period [1946 – 1949] a tormented and anguished artistic expression appears that is permeated and softened by a floating lyrical subject that is substantially more cruel than honesty that makes even sheer self-destruction... ‘pardonable.’”⁴ This period of her life was filled not only with an increased amount of self-observation through self-portraits, but also a sharpened degree of self-criticism and doubt.

As an artist who questioned the efficacy of being a female artist and continuously tried to lessen the impact of her gender on her art, pregnancy was hard to reckon with. Nevertheless, she continued to draw until the end of 1949. After the years of emotional torment, struggle, and seemingly artistic irrelevancy, Gedő, aged 28, chose to withdraw from the artistic world in every practical way. She not only removed herself from the artistic circles but also the creation of art. Instead, she pursued studies of art history, philosophy, and color theory. At this time, she had in

some sense become indifferent to the practicalities of being an artist.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

1 Ilka Gedő, Notebook no. 250, found within the artist's estate, 15-16, quoted in István Hajdu, "Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő," in *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921 – 1985): Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents*, ed. István Hajdu and Dávid Bíró (Gondolat Kiadó, 2003), 14.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 16.

4 Hajdu, "Half Picture, Half Veil — The Art of Ilka Gedő," 15.

4. **GEDŐ, Ilka** (Budapest 1921 – 1985 Budapest)
Hungarian School

SELF-PORTRAIT IN PREGNANCY (Blue Dress), circa 1947

Pastel on vellum paper. 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (34.7 × 18 cm).

PROVENANCE:

Estate of Ilka Gedő;

Private Collection, New York.



5. **GEDŐ, Ilka** (Budapest 1921 – 1985 Budapest)
Hungarian School

TABLE no. 2, 1949

Charcoal and graphite on tan, medium weight wove paper. 33 ⅛ × 23 ¼ in. (84 × 59 cm). On verso slight sketch of the table.

PROVENANCE:

Estate of Ilka Gedő.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 1995** *Ilka Gedő, 1921 – 1985: Drawings and Pastels*, Shepherd Gallery, New York, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, Winter 1995 (November 21 – December 29, 1995), cat. no. 3
- 2018** *19th & 20th Century Works from the Gallery Collection: An International Selection*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Summer 2018 (August 1 – September 20, 2018), cat. no. 63
- 2023** *Of Mythic Worlds: Works from the Distant Past through the Present*, The Drawing Center, New York, March 8 – May 18, 2023, pl. 7.

LITERATURE:

- 2023** Olivia Shao, *Of Mythic Worlds: Works from the Distant Past through the Present*, exh. cat. (The Drawing Center, 2023), 38-29, pl. 7, ill.



LAZARUS, Sidney (Bronx, New York 1912 – 1973 Valhalla, New York)**American School**

Amid-twentieth century artist who matched technical virtuosity with a boundless imagination, Sidney Lazarus' current obscurity is only understandable by examining his viewpoint and motivations.

The inspiration for his art came from his high regard for the "impromptu impulse." All impulses were viewed by him as creative directives, no matter how playful or serious, mischievous or dark. Such irreverent spontaneity gave shape to both his daily life and his art. One day he would do a meticulous drawing of a doorknob, the next it was some hauntingly surreal image of demons.

In 1931, he won a scholarship to attend the Art Students League, where he studied under Kimon Nicolaides (1891 – 1938) and Jean Charlot (1898 – 1979). Charlot took him under his wing as a protégé.

In 1932, at the age of 20, he became the youngest contributor to Alexander King's (1899 – 1965) *Americana* magazine, a short-lived satiric publication that had as contributors: George Grosz (1893 – 1959), John Sloan (1871 – 1951), S. J. Perlman (1904 – 1979), William Steig (1907 – 2003), Peggy Bacon (1895 – 1987), e.e. Cummings (1894 – 1962), Al Hirschfeld (1903 – 2003), and Miguel Covarrubias (1904 – 1957). He did numerous drawings for the magazine and became a lifelong friend of King and Hirschfeld. That same year, Charlot arranged for a one-man exhibition of Lazarus' drawings at the Julien Levy Gallery.

During the Depression, from 1932 to 1938, Lazarus participated in group shows at the Ferrargil, J. B. Newman, Weyhe, and Arista Galleries. *The World* described his drawings as "extraordinary for both their extraordinary artistic quality and their strange truculence." And *The Herald Tribune* commented, "His pen statement is rich in its variety of effects."

In 1935 he was appointed by the College Art Association as an art supervisor for three grade schools in Far Rockaway, as part of the WPA's mandate to employ artists. He also served as an art teacher for children in New York City settlement houses until 1940. When, in 1942, the Museum of Modern Art formed a committee under Victor D'Amico (1904 – 1987) to analyze art in education, Lazarus was one of a handful of artists appointed to the committee.

With America's entry into World War II, Lazarus, through the United States Office of Education, enrolled

in Manhattan College for coursework in advanced engineering drawing. At the same time, he was also working as an illustrator for Parents Institute. In 1942, The Metropolitan Museum employed him to do decorative maps, chalk talks, and demonstrations in its Junior Museum.

In the 1940s, America's art world was dominated by Social Realism and Regionalism. Lazarus didn't commit himself to either of those movements, but they appealed to him. As Abstract Expressionism came to define New York's art world, Lazarus pulled back from the gallery scene. Of all the modern art movements, he identified most with Surrealism and Dadaism.

During this period, he moved his family to Newburgh, NY, where he became good friends with the artist and sculptor Harry Wickey (1892 – 1968), who lived nearby in Cornwall. Wickey tried to help Lazarus' career by bringing curators and collectors to his studio. Throughout his life, Lazarus had met individuals who wanted to help him gain recognition for his work. He took particular delight in sabotaging those opportunities. When Wickey brought a prominent art collector to see him, promising that Lazarus was a truly wonderful artist, Lazarus perversely presented a grotesque spoof on Ingres' *Odalisque*, a painting of a sleeping concubine, her mouth open, toothless, her false teeth in a glass of water on a nearby end table.

In 1957, Lazarus felt it was time to return to New York City. Before the move, he organized a large exhibit of his artwork at the Crawford House in Newburgh, the headquarters of the Newburgh Historical Society. The majority of the works sold on opening night and several were acquired for permanent collection by Middletown College.

In 1958, his artwork was exhibited at the Hewitt Gallery. The last exhibition of his artwork during his lifetime would come six years later in 1964,

when Harry Wickey included two of his drawings in an exhibit entitled "Animals in Art" at The Storm King Art Center, where Wickey had become director.

In New York, Lazarus earned a living doing line drawings of TV stars for ABC, CBS and NBC. His drawings were supplied for publication to newspaper editors across the country by these major networks as a way to promote their new television shows.

As a counterpoint to commercial assignments that kept his family financially afloat, Lazarus felt the need to connect to the world in the role of an artist/philosopher. The impetus that led him to urge friends in Newburgh to explore their creativity, now broadened into a full-fledged philosophy based on insights from his study of Buddhism. He felt that he was onto something unique in proposing that people formed reality through the power of their own beliefs. Lazarus' hope was that, if this thought were made generally known, it would release a flood of human creativity. He witnessed that his belief was already gaining popular awareness through Existential writers and thinkers in the academic community.

Sidney Lazarus died of a stroke in 1973 after being ill for a number of years. He was buried at the Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York. His wife Sylvia joined him there in 1996. At his funeral, 300 people attended, many of whom spoke of life choices they had made that were influenced by knowing him.

In 1980 a posthumous exhibit of his work, organized by a young writer and admirer, Edward Williams, was held at The National Arts Club in New York.

Lazarus was considered singularly eccentric by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, but acknowledged for his powerful imagination, highly skilled talents, and the mystical undertones within his work. He admired and identified with outsider artists

like William Blake (1757 – 1827) and Henri Rousseau (1844 – 1910), obscure in their lifetimes, opposing the ruling artistic attitude of their periods.

Stephanie Hackett

6. **LAZARUS, Sidney** (Bronx, New York 1912 – 1973 Valhalla, New York)
American School

WINGED CREATURES, 1951

Ink, scratch technique, and airbrush on heavy-weight cream card. No watermark. Sheet size: 15 7/8 × 19 in. (39.6 × 48.3 cm). Image size: 12 3/8 × 16 in. (31.5 × 40.6 cm). Scratch signature and date lower right: S. LAZARUS '51.

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the artist, and thence by descent.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2015** *Sidney Lazarus, 1912 – 1973: Fantastical and Visionary Works*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Winter 2015 (October 29 – December 19, 2015), cat. no. 12.
- 2017** *The Back Room*, Shin Gallery, New York, May 3 – Jul 2, 2017.
- 2019** *The Symbolist Vision*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Spring 2019 (March 5 – April 20, 2019), cat. no. 41.
- 2024** *Celebrating the Publication of “Julien Levy: The Man, His Gallery, His Legacy,”* January 26 – February 24, 2024, cat. no. 32.



7. **LAZARUS, Sidney** (Bronx, New York 1912 – 1973 Valhalla, New York)
American School

ABSTRACTION, 1952

Ink, ink wash, watercolor, gouache, and scratch technique on heavy-weight cream wove paper. No watermark. Sheet size: 12 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (30.7 × 29.2 cm). Sight size: 10 × 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (25.4 × 22.2 cm). On verso: partial, loose graphite study of reclining nude woman.

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the artist, and thence by descent.

EXHIBITIONS:

2015 *Sidney Lazarus, 1912 – 1973: Fantastical and Visionary Works*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Winter 2015 (October 29 – December 19, 2015), cat. no. 15.

2017 *The Back Room*, Shin Gallery, New York, May 3 – Jul 2, 2017.

2024 *Celebrating the Publication of "Julien Levy: The Man, His Gallery, His Legacy,"* January 26 – February 24, 2024, cat. no. 12.



MILLEKER, Elizabeth J. (b. Boston 1935)**American School**

Elizabeth J. Milleker served as Associate Curator of Greek and Roman Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York for 25 years, from 1986 to 2009 when she retired. Before her time at the MET, Milleker spent a decade in Paris, studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, and frequented the Louvre at every opportunity. She later earned her PhD at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 1986, with a dissertation on “The Statue of Apollo Lykeios in Athens.”¹ While at the MET she was instrumental in the renovation of the Greek and Roman Study Collection that took place from 1996 to 2007. As a scholar, Milleker has authored two books, *The Year One: Art of the Ancient World East and West* in 2000 and *Light on Stone: Greek and Roman Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a Photographic Essay* in 2003, both published by the MET. She also contributed regularly to various books and periodicals including the *Metropolitan Museum Journal*.

Milleker had her first solo show at Shepherd & Derom Galleries in 2004 called *Elizabeth J. Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate* with a collection of watercolors and gouaches inspired by her work on Greek and Roman Art.² The exhibition, under the name “*The Cloak of Hectate*”: *Works on Paper by Elizabeth J. Milleker*, was then shown in the North Fork Bank in May of 2005. In 2022 Milleker was included in a group show at Loong Mah Gallery, *Entre Centre et Absence*.³ In 2023 she had a solo show at Loong Mah Gallery entitled *Elizabeth Milleker: Edge of Emergence*⁴ and was featured in *Of Mythic Worlds: Works from the Distant Past through the Present*,⁵ a group exhibition at the Drawing Center (alongside Ilka Gedö), both curated by Olivia Shao, a New York-based curator.⁶

Milleker’s artistic practice is deeply influenced by her professional career as curator of Greek and Roman art. The four works exhibited in *The 20th Century at Shepherd Gallery* were selected from Milleker’s series *The Cloak of Hectate* which evokes the story of Hectate—a Greek goddess—paths taken, and boundaries traversed. In the ancient myth, Hectate protects travelers at crossroads and boundaries. She shelters under her mantle the goddess Persephone, who crosses between Earth and the Underworld.

In Milleker’s own words, her work articulates “an internal journey through a succession of abstract paintings. All approach the same challenge—how to give visual form to states of mind, conscious and unconscious. Images emerge through the process of painting itself. Some fall into series; some suggest a mood or feeling, others call up

age-old myths. Enigmatic and open-ended, they invite the viewer to new interpretations that can enrich that inward exploration, common to us all.”⁷

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 Elizabeth J. Milleker, “The Statue of Apollo Lykeios in Athens” (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1986), <https://openpublishing.psu.edu/ahd/content/statue-apollo-lykeios-athens>.
- 2 Elizabeth J. Milleker: *The Cloak of Hecate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005.
- 3 *Entre Centre et Absence*, Loong Mah Gallery, New York, April 5 – May 15, 2022.
- 4 Elizabeth Milleker: *Edge of Emergence*, Loong Mah Gallery, New York, September 21, 2023 – November 5, 2023.
- 5 *Of Mythic Worlds: Works from the Distant Past through the Present*, The Drawing Center, New York, March 8 – May 14, 2023, <https://drawingcenter.org/exhibitions/of-mythic-worlds>.
- 6 In 2023 Shao was appointed as the first Burger Collection & TOY Meets Art Curator at the Drawing Center, a position which she will hold from January 2024 to January 2027.
- 7 Loong Mah Gallery, “Elizabeth Milleker: Edge of Emergence,” press release, September 2022.

8. **MILLEKER, Elizabeth J.** (b. Boston 1935)
American School

THE GODDESS HECTATE, 2002 – 2003

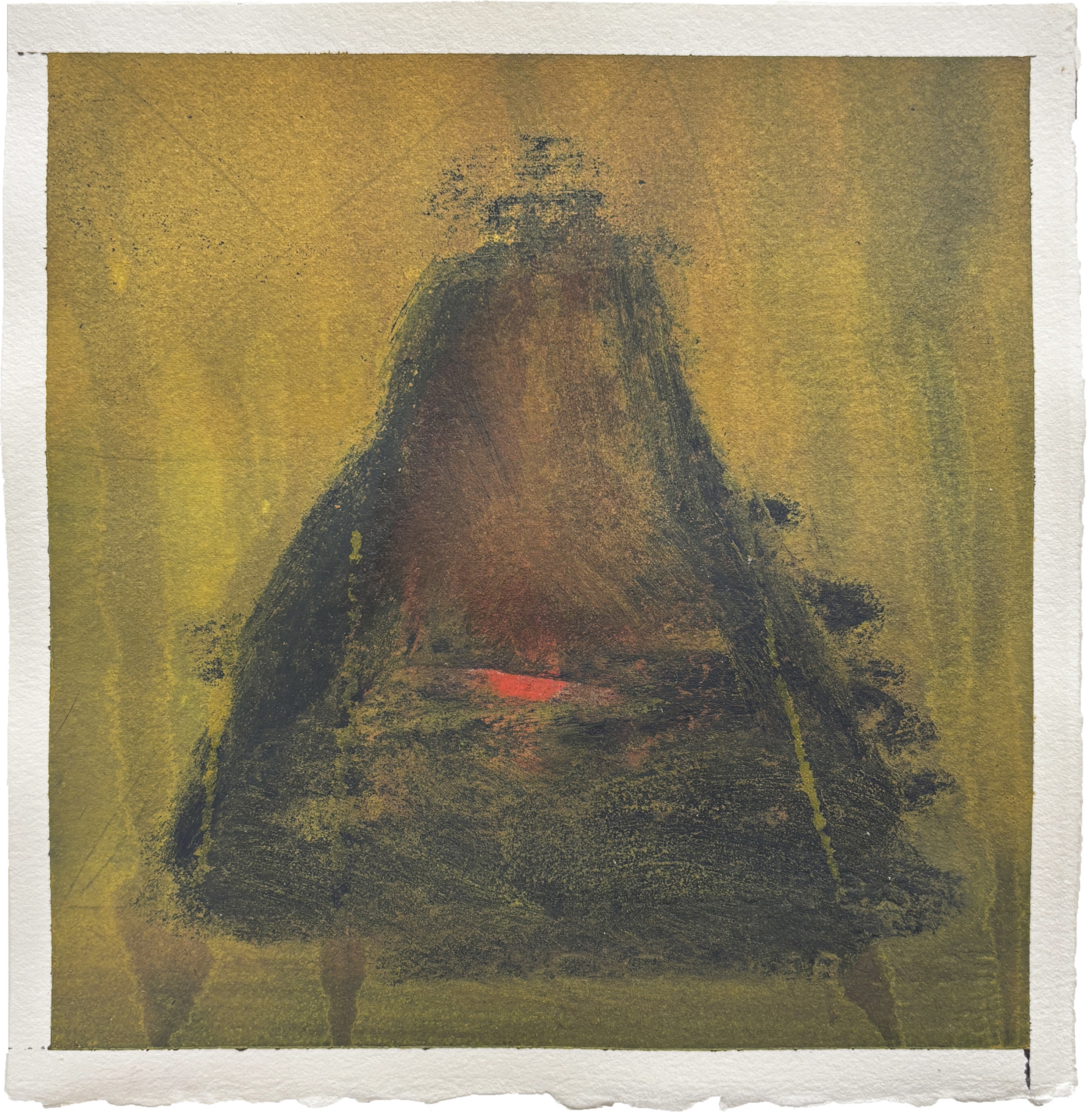
Gouache and oil stick on Arches watercolor paper. $8 \times 7 \frac{7}{8}$ in. (20.3×20 cm). Signed on verso with a monogram stamp: *EJM*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2004** *Elizabeth J. Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005, cat. no. 1.
- 2005** “*The Cloak of Hectate*”: *Works on Paper by Elizabeth Milleker*, North Ford Bank, New York, organized by Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, May 5, 2005, cat. no. 1.
- 2022** *Entre Centre et Absence*, Loong Mah Gallery, New York, April 5 – May 15, 2022.



9. **MILLEKER, Elizabeth J.** (b. Boston 1935)
American School

LIMITS, 2002 – 2003

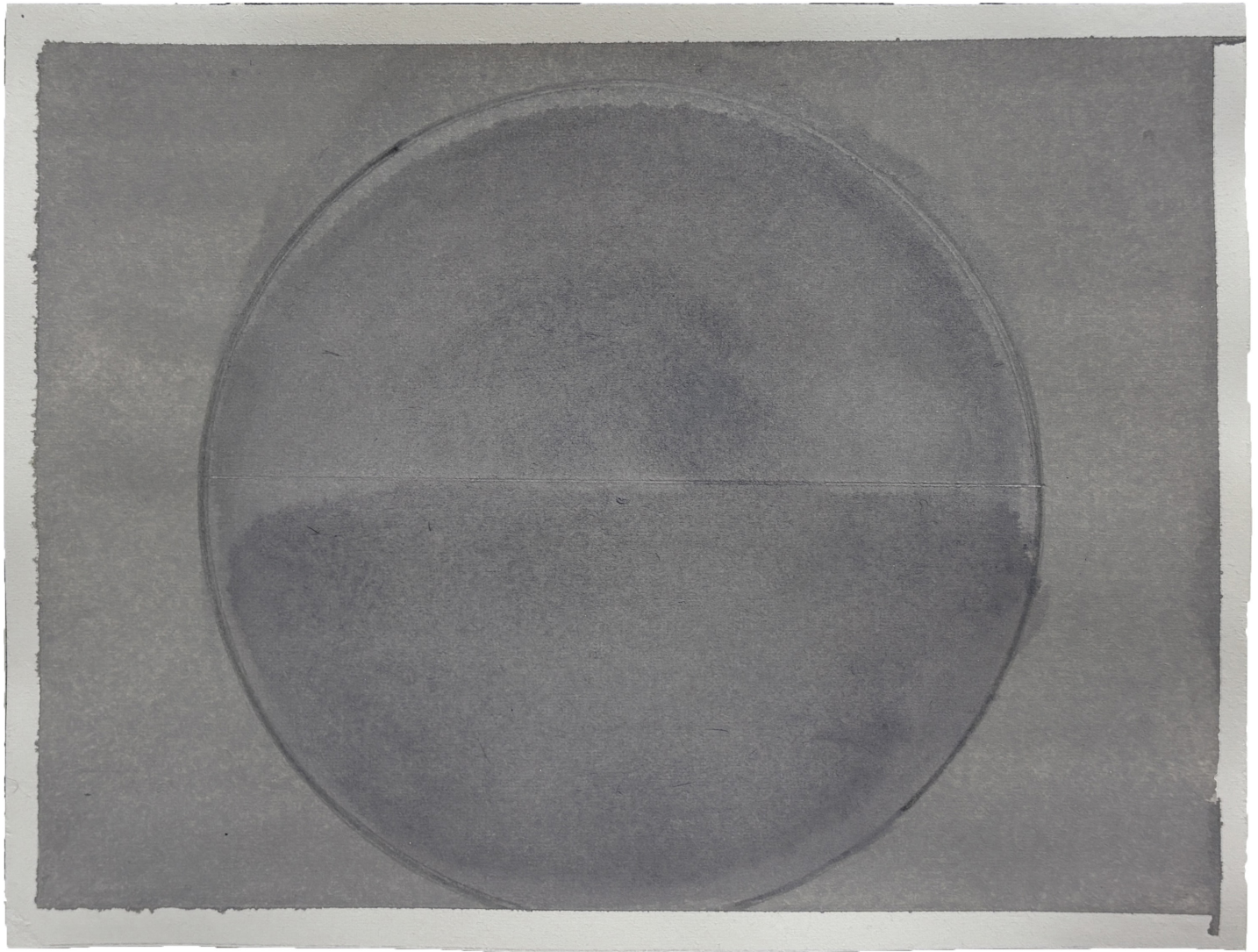
Watercolor and gouache on Arches watercolor paper. 6 ⅞ × 8 ⅞ in. (15.6 × 20.6 cm). Signed on verso with a monogram stamp: *EJM*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2004** *Elizabeth J. Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005, cat. no. 3.
- 2005** *“The Cloak of Hectate”: Works on Paper by Elizabeth Milleker*, North Ford Bank, New York, organized by Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, May 5, 2005, cat. no. 3.



10. **MILLEKER, Elizabeth J.** (b. Boston 1935)
American School

THE CLOAK OF TRANSFORMATION, 2002 – 2003

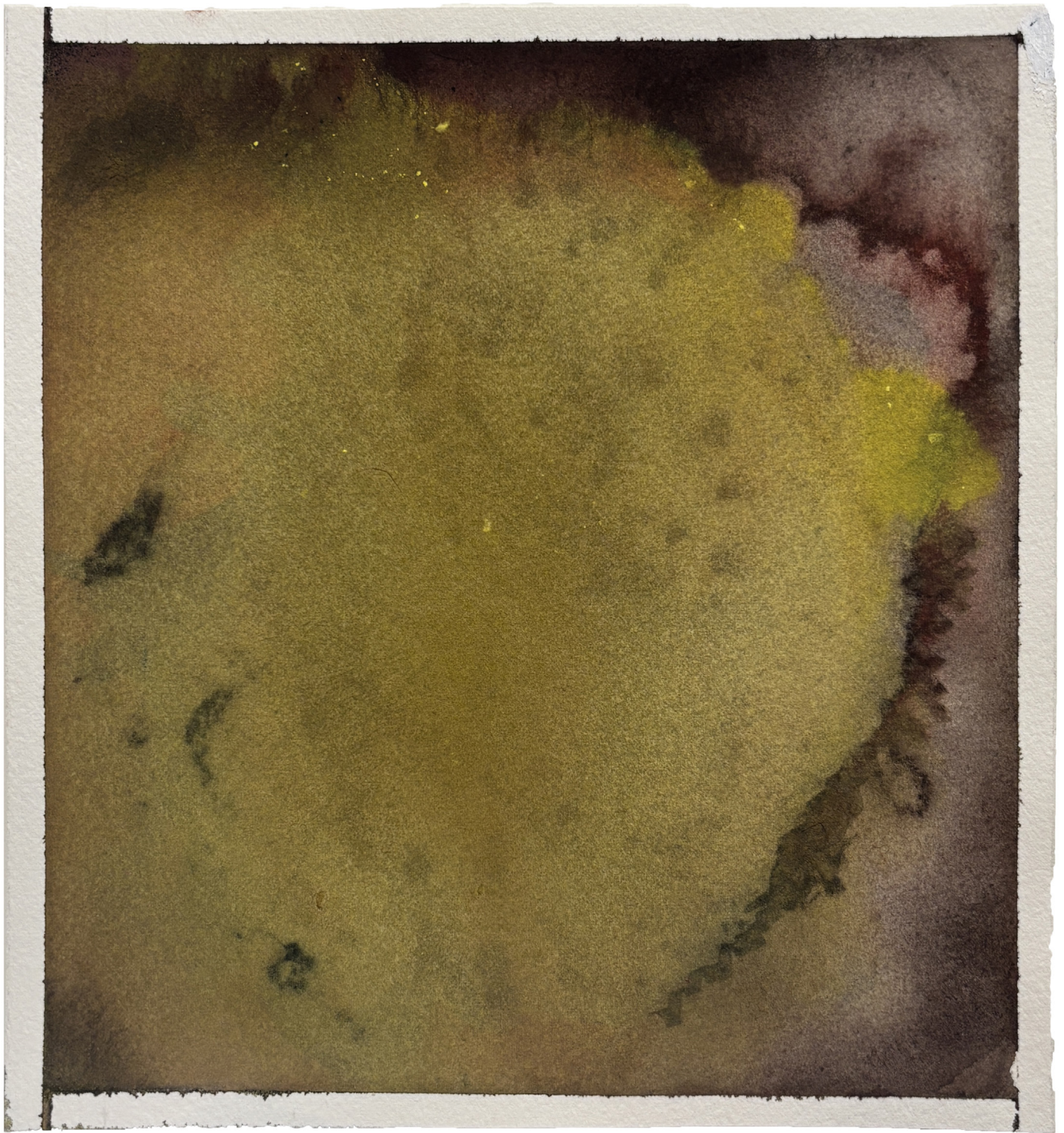
Watercolor and gouache on Arches watercolor paper. $8 \frac{1}{4} \times 7 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (21 × 19.7 cm). Signed on verso with a monogram stamp: *EJM*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2004** *Elizabeth J. Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005, cat. no. 5.
- 2005** “*The Cloak of Hectate*”: *Works on Paper by Elizabeth Milleker*, North Ford Bank, New York, organized by Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, May 5, 2005, cat. no. 5.



11. **MILLEKER, Elizabeth J.** (b. Boston 1935)
American School

DESCENT TO THE UNDERWORLD, 2002 – 2003

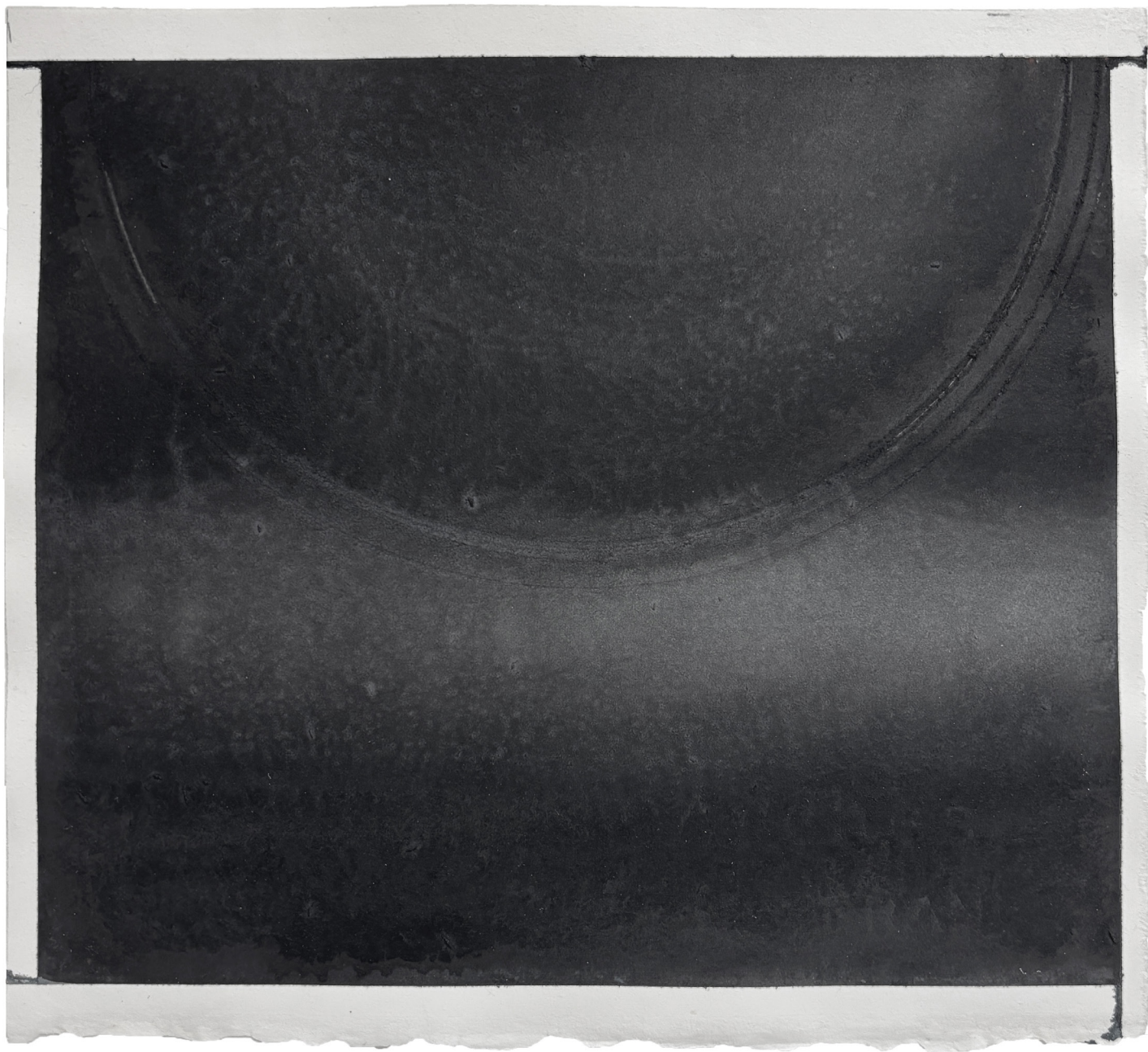
Gouache and Sumi ink on Arches watercolor paper. 7 ¼ × 8 in. (18.4 × 20.3 cm). Signed on verso with a monogram stamp: *EJM*.

PROVENANCE:

The studio of the artist.

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2004** *Elizabeth J. Milleker: The Cloak of Hectate*, Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, November 30, 2004 – January 15, 2005, cat. no. 10.
- 2005** “*The Cloak of Hectate*”: *Works on Paper by Elizabeth Milleker*, North Ford Bank, New York, organized by Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York, May 5, 2005, cat. no. 10.
- 2022** *Entre Centre et Absence*, Loong Mah Gallery, New York, April 5 – May 15, 2022.



NAMA, George (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

George Nama was born in Homestead, across the river from Pittsburgh, which in the early 1950s witnessed an intensively creative moment with a vibrant jazz scene and the Carnegie International exhibitions.

He studied at Carnegie Mellon University (CIT) for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees. In the 1960s, Nama worked at William Stanley Hayter's (1901 – 1988) influential Atelier 17 in Paris, where he was part of an international artistic circle. In 1981 he was elected to the National Academy of Design, New York. He was an influential teacher of draftsmanship and printmaking, while continuing to develop his own abstract take on natural forms.

Already involved with poets and writers since the early 1960s, Nama collaborated in 1976 with his friend the French poet and art historian Yves Bonnefoy (1923 – 2016), on artist's books. This in turn fostered a series of artist's books and exhibitions with (1931 – 2025) and Charles Simic (1938 – 2023) at Shepherd Gallery.

During his long career, Nama has been represented in numerous exhibitions, galleries and public collections, such as The Morgan Library, the Boston Athenaeum, The Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Carnegie Institute. He has also been included in the distinguished international art fairs at Maastricht and the Salon de Dessin in Paris. His studio is in Montauk, where he has recorded the dunes of its beaches.

David Wojciechowski and Robert Kashey

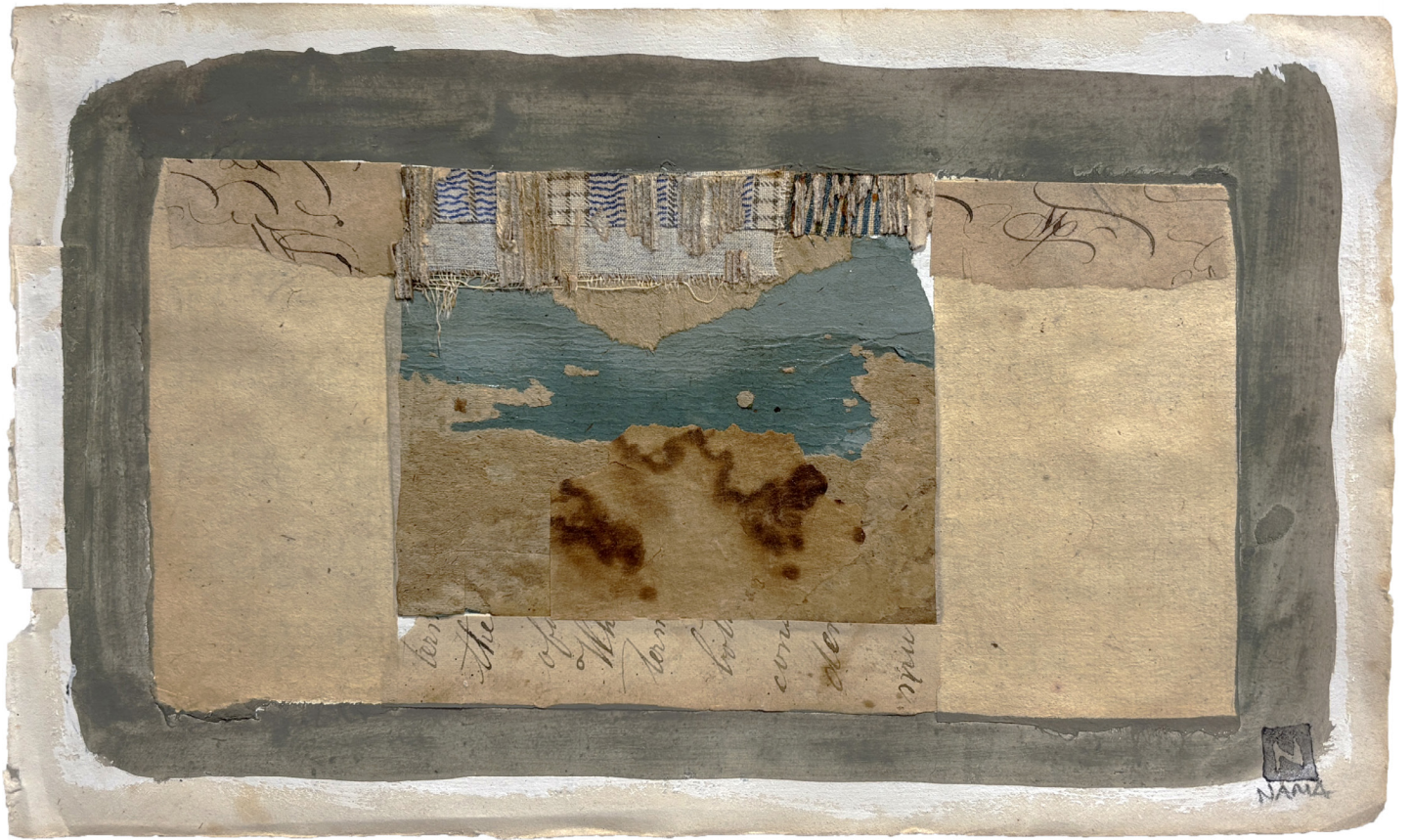
12. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, 1969/70

Mixed media collage. 5 $\frac{5}{16}$ $\times$ 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12.2 $\times$ 24.1 cm). Artist stamp at lower right; signed in pencil at lower right: *NAMA*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist



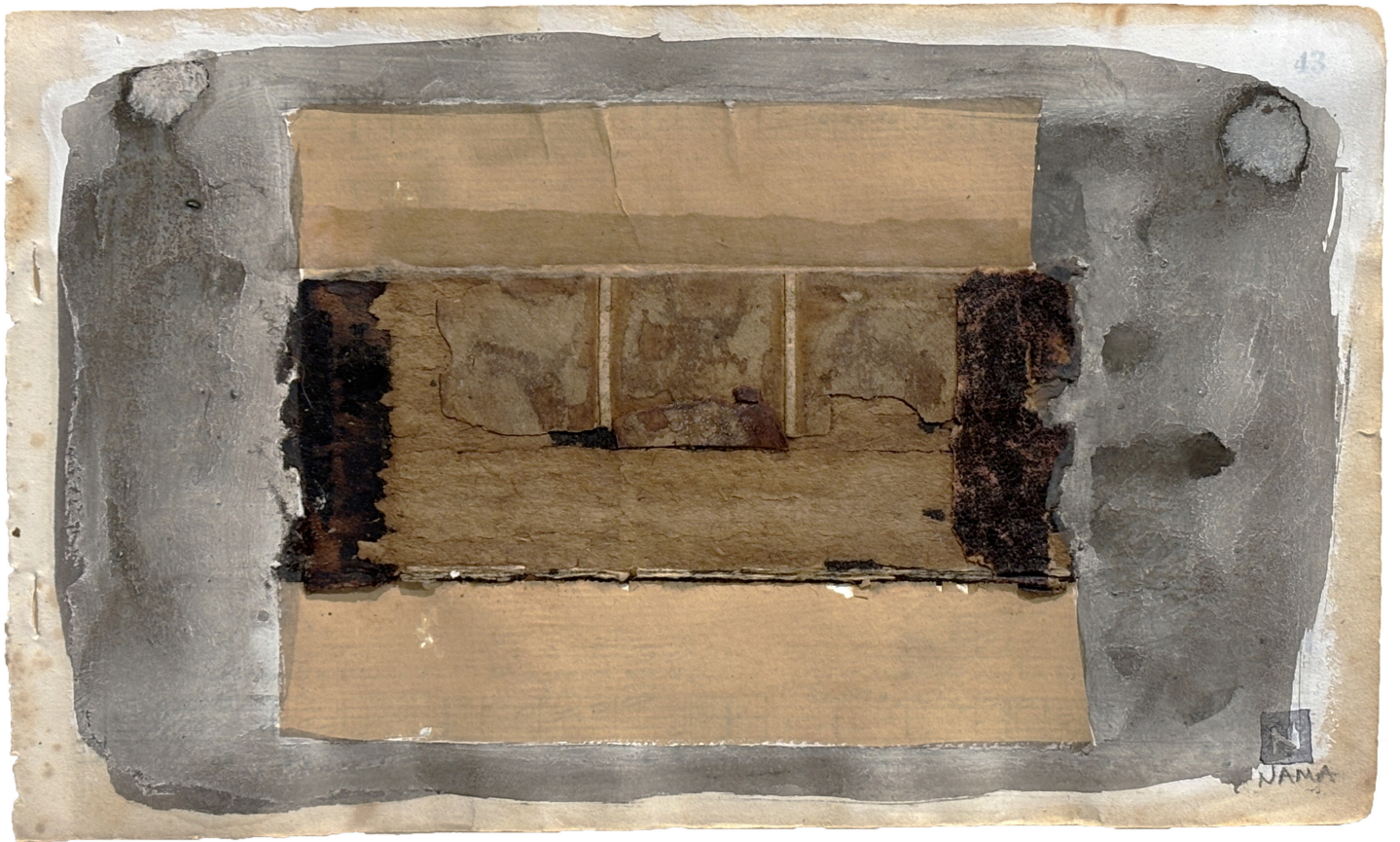
13. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, 1969/70

Mixed media collage. 5 $\frac{5}{16}$ $\times$ 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (12.2 $\times$ 24.1 cm). Artist stamp at lower right; signed in pencil at lower right: *NAMA*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist



14. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

VON TEUFELN / DEVILS' PAGEANT [artist book], poems by Alfred Brendel, 2001

Ten etchings printed on *Arches* Velin paper to accompany poems by Alfred Brendel. Overall sheet size: 12 7/8 × 25 7/8 in. (32.7 × 65.7 cm). Signed below images at center in graphite: *NAMA*. Signed on the colophon by Alfred Brendel and George Nama in graphite. Published by Monument Press in Montauk, 2001. Contained in a silk-lined clamshell folio. Edition of 50 numbered suites, plus 15 artist proofs.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2001** *Von Teufeln / Devils' Pageant: Poems by Alfred Brendel with Etchings by George Nama*, Shepherd and Derom Galleries, New York, Spring 2001 (March 28 – May 25, 2001).
- 2002** *Devils' Pageant: Collaboration Between George Nama & Alfred Brendel*, Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles, April 6 – May 31, 2002.
- 2003** *Etchings and Drawings by George Nama*, Patrick Derom Gallery, Brussels, in collaboration with Shepherd and Derom Galleries, New York, February 6 – March 15, 2003.
- 2007** *George Nama: Gouachen un Radierungen*, Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, München, May 5 – 22, 2007.
- 2008** *Les diables et les anges / Devils and Angels: Poems par Alfred Brendel, gravures a l'eau-forte, gouaches, et sculptures par George Nama*, Galerie Chantal Grangé, Paris, October 6 – 27, 2008.

In the 2001 exhibition of *Von Teufeln/The Devils' Pageant* at Shepherd and Derom Galleries, a few of Nama's sketches and ten of his sculptures exploring the subject of the devil were on view alongside the collaborative artist book. *Von Teufeln/The Devils' Pageant* marked the first time George Nama and Alfred Brendel (1931 – 2025), the classical pianist, poet, and composer, collaborated on an artist book. From New York, the exhibition travelled to Los Angeles and Brussels, and the artist book was shown in Paris and Munich.

Grace Glueck (1926 – 2022), art critic at the *New York Times*, raved about Nama's work in the 2001 exhibition saying, "Having responded to Mr. Brendel's text, Mr. Nama's work has actually achieved a life of its own."

ALFRED BRENDDEL

VON TEUFELN

DEVILS' PAGEANT

ENGLISH VERSIONS BY THE AUTHOR
WITH RICHARD STOKES



ETCHINGS BY
GEORGE NAMA

MONUMENT PRESS · MONTAUK, NEW YORK

2001

The test is, how well could it come off in the absence of Mr. Brendel's poetry? Very well indeed."¹ Nama and Brendel collaborated many times over the years on artist books and exhibitions. Ideas were passed back and forth between the two busy artists during late night phone calls and intensive meetings in backstage areas or hotel rooms. Eventually, Nama's dream-like abstractions morphed into appropriate escorts for Brendel's poems. Brendel first came across Nama's work in the late 90s, "I encountered George Nama's work first in 1996, in Vevey, Switzerland, at the exhibition honoring the great poet Yves Bonnefoy (1923 – 2016), and was immediately struck by the portfolios he had done with Bonnefoy... One of the startling features of George Nama's gouache drawings and etchings is their closeness to sculptural work."²

ENDNOTES

1 Grace Glueck, "Art in Review: 'Von Teufeln/Devils' Pageant," *New York Times*, April 6, 2001, 38, sec. E, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/06/arts/art-in-review-von-teufeln-devils-pageant.html>.

2 Alfred Brendel, quoted in *George Nama: Fleeting Images: A Survey, 1958 – 2008* (Shepherd W&K Galleries, 2013), n.p., <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2013-Nama.pdf>.

I

Den Kopf voran
kommen sie angerannt
und rammen einem ihre Hörndeln
in den Busen
falls man sich eines solchen
zu erfreuen vermag
oder sie kitzeln ihn
den Busen
mit ihren Hörndeln
dass man wiehert
und sich nass macht
bis am Ende
nur mehr ein Lacherl
eine Lacke
von uns übrigbleibt
darin planschen sie dann herum
wie die kleinen Kinder
wer hätte das
von den Teufeln gedacht



NAMA

There they go again
whooshing up
to ram their cute little horns
into our bosoms
provided our bosoms are big enough to flaunt
or to tickle them with their horns
making us wet ourselves
till
all that's left of us
is a puddle
in which they splash around
like little kids
Who'd have thought
devils
capable of such behaviour

II

Am Montagmorgen
verstimmt Stechbein die Klaviere
Am Dienstag
versteckt er die Lyra
Am Mittwoch
giesst er Kollodium auf die Saiten
Am Donnerstag
bestreicht er die Tasten mit Leim
Am Freitag
frisst er die Hammerköpfe
Am Samstag
legt er Feuer ans Gehäuse
Am Sonntag
besüft er sich mit Weinsteg
Auch Klavierteufel
haben ihren freien Tag



NAMA

On Monday morning
Stechbein arrives to mess up the tuning
on Tuesday
he hides the pedals
on Wednesday
he pours collodium over the strings
on Thursday
he covers the keys with glue
on Friday
he guzzles the hammers
on Saturday
he sets the case on fire
on Sunday
he gets drunk with Weinsteg
Even piano devils
have their day off

III

Grosse Teufel
Behemoths Ahrimans
verstopfen bloss die Wasserrohre
oder stecken knirschend im Schornstein
Sachkundig entfernt sie die Feuerwehr
während die kleinen namenlosen
ungehindert ihrer Tätigkeit nachgehen
Kaum wahrnehmbar
sitzen sie im Gehörgang
nagen an den Halswirbeln
oder rasseln durch die Lunge
Gezähnte Teufel
sogenannte Krampasse
sind gesuchte Tischnachbarn
An Festtagen
erschrecken sie kleine Kinder
und röten die Wangen der Hausfrau



Big devils
Behemoth Ahrimans
merely block the water-pipes
or get stuck in the chimney
The fire-brigade
removes them routinely
while the small anonymous ones
carry on their business unhampered
Well-nigh invisible
they nestle in your eardrum
nibble at your joints
or rattle through your thorax
House-trained devils
are sought-after dinner guests
Smiling coyly
they ogle the hostess
with their yellow eyes

IV

Am Fernsehen
liebten sie ihn inzwischen
applaudierten
wenn die Grossaufnahme seines Gebisses
den Bildschirm bedeckte
Schlotternd vor ihm aufgereiht
stehen wir da
ihm zum Frass
wobei zu vermerken ist
dass er uns jeweils nur zur Hilfe verstimmt
etwas Weibliches in ihm
schreckt vor dem Äussersten zurück
das muss man ihm zugute halten
wenn man ihn dabei erwischt
wie er seine Tiraden und Zähne zuspitzt
Übrigens warten die Ambulanzen
startbereit vor der Tür
und sausen mit dem
was von uns übriggeblieben ist
durch die Stadt
während die Krankenschwestern
Autogramme heischend
uns gegen Starrkrampf und Tollwut impfen
Nach ein paar Wochen oder Jahren
sitzen wir wieder an unserm Arbeitsplatz
Steinway & Sons
ein Toupet auf dem Kopf
das Bein in der Schiene
aufs linke Pedal kann man notfalls verzichten



By now
they'd come to adore him
rejoicing
whenever a close-up of his teeth
filled the TV screen
Waiting our turn to be devoured
we stand in line
shivering with fear
though it must be admitted
that he only consumes half of us
something lyrical in himself
keeps him from finishing the job
this
in all fairness
we should consider
when watching him
trim his tirades
and sharpen his teeth
Engines running
the ambulances outside
stand ready to rush off with our remains
howling through town
while the nurses
eager for our autograph
inject us against lockjaw and rabies
A few weeks or years later
we return to our work-place
Steinway & Sons
a toupee on our head
one leg in a splint
To hell with the left pedal

V

Wenn Teufel sich langweilen
spielen sie Gutsein
Sie falten die Hände
rücken ihre Mienen zurecht
und verzählen einander alles
was sie je Teuflisches getan hatten
oder gerne taten
Wer am lautesten weint
darf zwacken



When devils feel bored
they play at being good
With pious faces
hands neatly folded
they sit round the boardroom table
and forgive each other anything they ever did
or might be itching to do
The first to dissolve in tears
wins

VI

Dämonen
von Göttern kaum zu unterscheiden
spielen auf unseren Seelenfalten
wie Instrumentalisten
bravourös aber schmerzhaft
Wenn sie uns zwicken
dann winseln wir
wie Hunde
die hinauswollen
die Sterne anzubellen
Hündisch möchten wir sie beißen
unsere Peiniger
und beißen doch nur
in die eigene Zunge



Demons
scarcely distinguishable from gods
play on the furrows of our souls
like instrumentalists
painfully but with panache
When they squeeze us
we whine
like dogs craving to get out
to bark at the dark
Dog-like
we'd love to bite them
our tormentors
only to find ourselves
biting our own tongues

VII

Nein
die Köchin war es nicht
auch der Gärtner
kann es nicht gewesen sein
noch weniger
denken wir an die Zofe
ganz zu schweigen von Griffiths
dem Butler
obgleich dessen Gesicht
einen verkniffenen Zug aufweist
Keinesfalls wollen wir die Corgies verdächtigen
die
es lässt sich nicht leugnen
bereits mehrere Kinder und Halbwüchslige
auf beklagenswerte Weise verstümmelt haben
Selbst der Gutsverwalter
ein Zigeuner
welte zur Tatzeit
meilenweit entfernt
im Wohnwagen seiner Familie
Vollends die Annahme
es möchte der Hausherr persönlich
in die Affäre verwickelt sein
dürfen wir
da ihre Lordschaft nur ein Bein haben
als Verleumdung zurückweisen
Ein Gedenkstein
wird im Gemüsegarten
an das traurige Ereignis erinnern



No it wasn't the cook
and don't let's blame the gardener
still less the lady's maid
least of all Griffiths
the butler
despite his haggard look
On no account
should we consider the corgies
who have
admittedly
mutilated a number of toddlers before
As for the farm manager
a self-declared gipsy
he had joined his family for dinner
in their caravan
miles away
Finally
any personal involvement of our host
may safely be discounted
since his Lordship is equipped
with only one leg
A statue in the vegetable garden
will remind us for ever
of the sorry affair

VIII

Dass es Teufel
im Grunde gar nicht gibt
hat uns kürzlich
der Leihkafte selbst verraten
Wir haben dies
betrübt zur Kenntnis genommen
und beschlossen
in Zukunft
uns selbst an die Wand zu malen



The news
that the devil does not
actually exist
was relayed to us
by none other
than the devil himself
Duly saddened
we have pondered this fact
and decided henceforth
to advertise our own hell

IX

Am Ufer
liegen die Gondeln
wie gestrandete Wale
Aus den Dachstühlen am Canal Grande
dringt schwarzer Rauch
Seufzend
versinkt die Kuppel von Santa Maria Maggiore
in der Lagune
Eine letzte Explosion
zerstückelt den Dogenpalast
Die Ratten
haben die Grösse von Hauskatzen erreicht
Von der Flutwelle erfasst
plätschern sie im Innern von San Marco
und beissen die Priester
die versuchen
die Gebeine des Heiligen zu retten
Stoisch
lenkt Mario Praz die Ereignisse
und richtet
als alles vollbracht ist
seinen Blick
im Spiegel
auf sich selbst



Gondolas
lie scattered upside down
like stranded whales
Black smoke
billows from the rooftops
The dome of Santa Maria Maggiore sinks moaning
into the lagoon
One final explosion
rips apart the Doge's Palace
Swept along by the flood
rodents
the size of tomcats
paddle about inside San Marco
and bite the clerics
who struggle to salvage what's left of their Saint
When all is over
Mario Praz
the master of ceremonies
faces himself in the mirror
ready for the duel
of evil eyes

X

Freudig
läuft er auf Dich zu
der Mensch mit dem Messer
Er will Dich schlachten
soviel ist klar
Du siehst es daran
wie er das Messer hält
beide Hände am Griff
ein Schlächtermesser
auf Deinen Magen gerichtet
der sich zusammenkrampft
bevor der Stoss
unabwendbar
Dich umwirft
Durchbohrt
stehst Du auf
als sei nichts gewesen



Beaming with delight
he pursues you
the man with the knife
He wants to butcher you
that's clear
look how he's holding his knife
fingers clasped around the shaft
a butcher's knife
pointed at your stomach
which contracts in a spasm
before the thrust
inevitably
fells you
Pierced
you rise and walk away
smiling

COLOPHON

This portfolio is a collaboration consisting of ten etchings
printed on Arches Velin paper to accompany ten poems with the
original German version and English translation.

The text is set in Bulmer and Linotype Monticello and printed by
Darrell Hyder, The Sun Hill Press, North Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Bindings were made by Jim DiMarcantonio, Hope Bindery,
Providence, Rhode Island.

All the prints are signed by the artist
in an edition of fifty copies numbered 1 – 50
and fifteen artist's proofs numbered in Roman numerals.

Ten additional copies will remain unfolded.

This is copy number

15

Art. Name 61

GEORGE NAMA

15. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, from *The Devils' Pageant*, 2001

Patinated bronze, unique cast. $10 \times 8 \frac{1}{2} \times 4 \frac{3}{4}$ in. ($25.5 \times 21.5 \times 12$ cm).

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist

EXHIBITIONS:

2001 *Von Teuffln Devil's Pageant: Poems by Alfred Brendel with Etchings by George Nama*, Shepherd and Derom Galleries, New York, Spring 2001 (March 28 – May 25, 2001), cat. no. 3.



16. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, from *The Devils' Pageant*, 2001

Patinated bronze, unique cast. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 8 × 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (27.3 × 20.3 × 21.5 cm).

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.

EXHIBITIONS:

2001 *Von Teuffln Devil's Pageant: Poems by Alfred Brendel with Etchings by George Nama*, Shepherd and Derom Galleries, New York, Spring 2001 (March 28 – May 25, 2001), cat. no. 6.



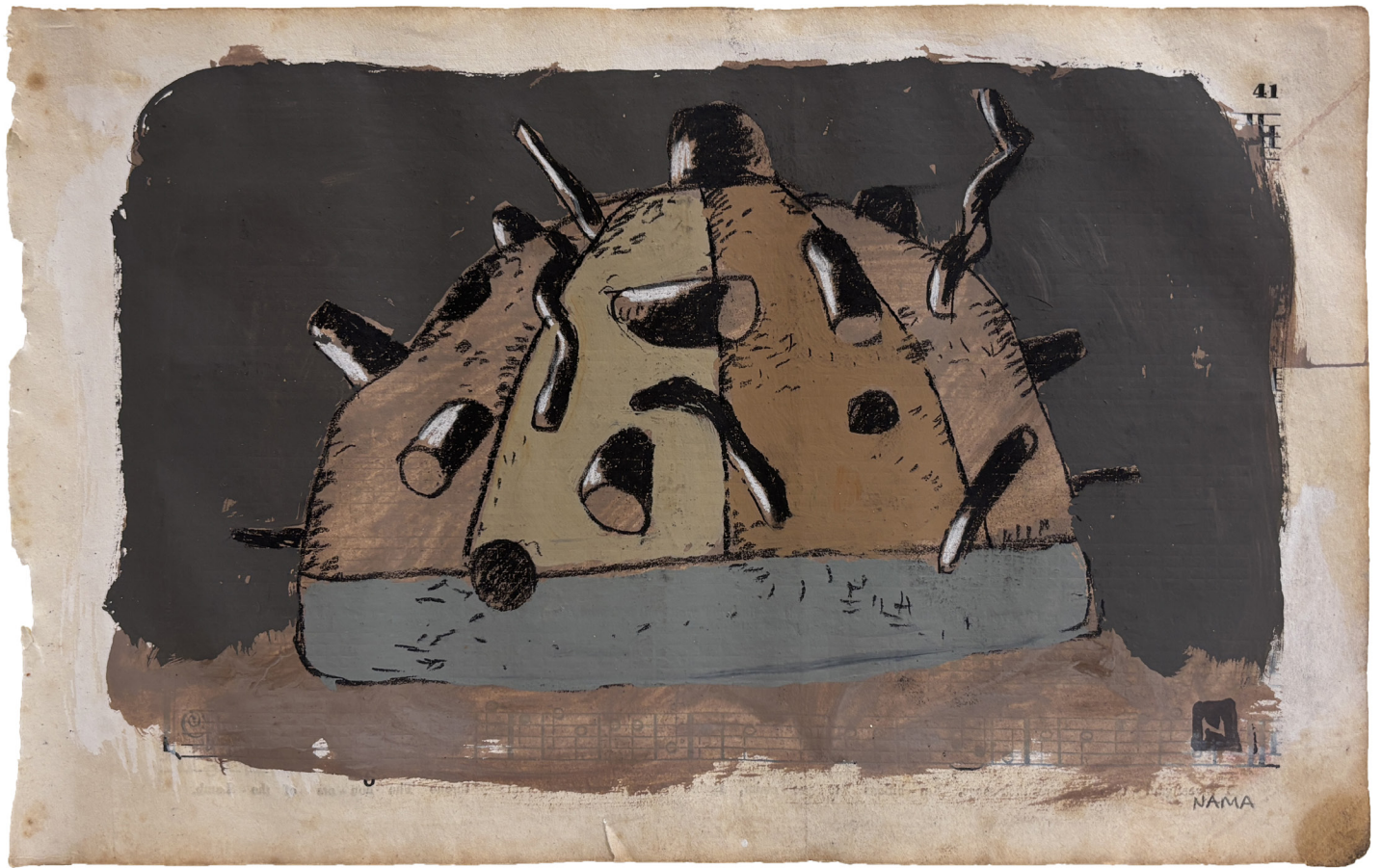
17. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, sketch for the artist book *The Devils' Pageant*, with poems by Alfred Brendel, 2001

Gouache and charcoal on antique sheet music. $6 \frac{1}{16} \times 9 \frac{9}{16}$ (irregular left edge). Artist stamp at lower right; signed in pencil at lower right: *NAMA*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.



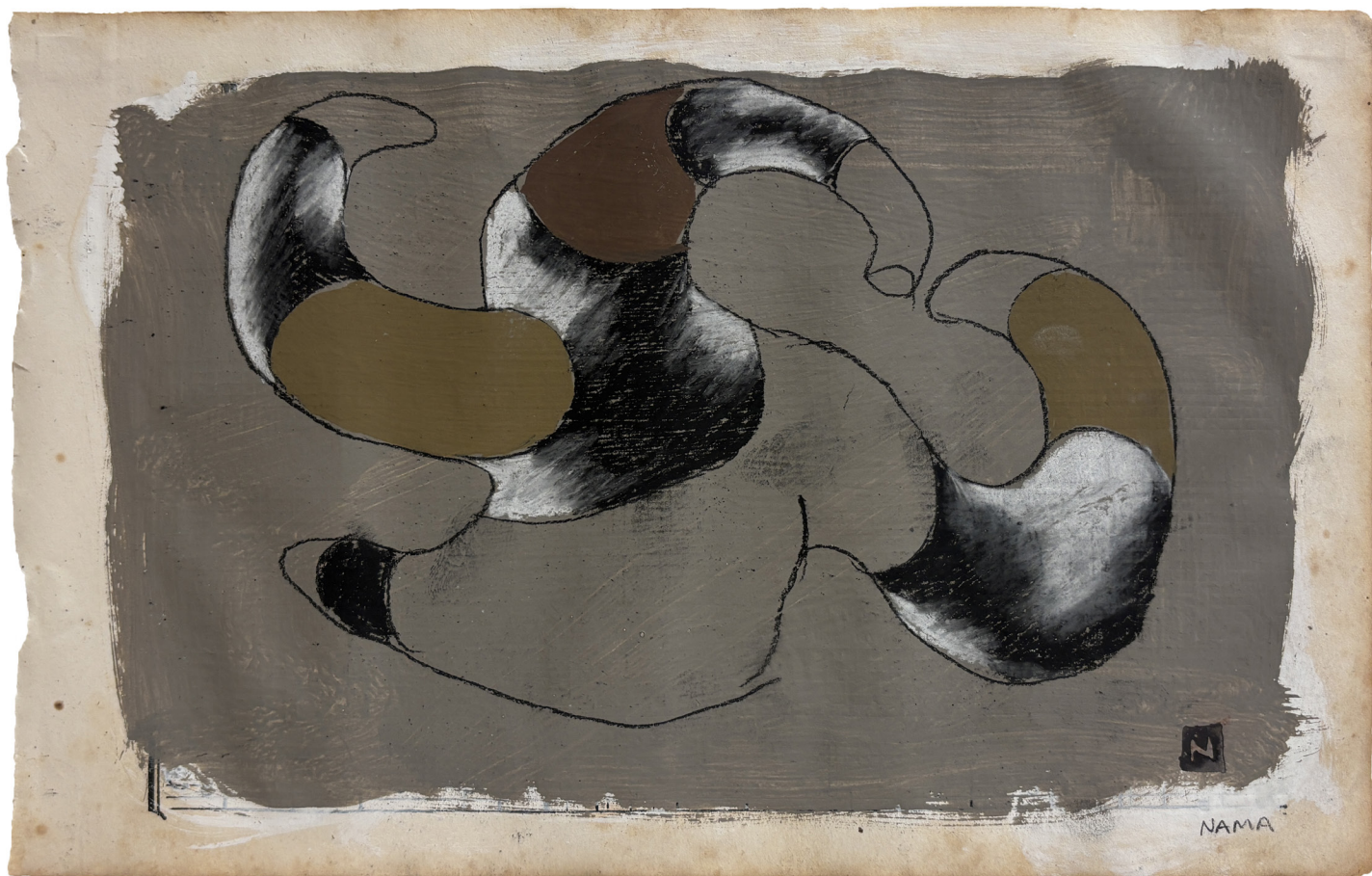
18. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

UNTITLED, sketch related to pl. VI of the artist book *The Devils' Pageant*, with poems by Alfred Brendel, 2001

Gouache and charcoal on antique sheet music. $6 \frac{1}{16} \times 9 \frac{9}{16}$ (irregular left edge). Artist stamp at lower right; signed in pencil at lower right: *NAMA*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist.



19. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

LIBERATOR [artist book], short story by George Romero, 2013

Seven etchings printed on *Arches* Velin paper to accompany an original short story by George A. Romero. Overall sheet size: (approximately) 19 ½ × 25 ¾ in. (49.5 × 65.4 cm). Inscribed below images in graphite at left; signed below images in graphite at right: *NAMA*. Signed on the colophon by George A. Romero in graphite. Published by Monument Press in Montauk, 2013. Contained in a cloth-lined clamshell folio. Edition of 35 numbered suites, plus 10 artist proofs.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist

EXHIBITIONS:

- 2017** *An Exhibition Featuring a Portfolio of Etchings for Liberator, a short story by George A. Romero*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, in collaboration with Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles, September 19 – October 14, 2017.
- 2017** *Liberator: George Nama & George A. Romero, an Exhibition & Publication*, Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles, in collaboration with Shepherd W&K Galleries, October 28, 2017 – December 23, 2017.

Liberator draws its title from one of George Romero's (1940 – 2017) final works – a short story written specifically to be illuminated by his friend, the artist George Nama. The first exhibition of this book and the collaboration between George Nama and George Romero occurred in 2017 in association with Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles. The exhibition revolved around Romero's poignant story inspired by the Golem – an ancient folkloric legend – and George Nama's related etchings, drawings, and collages. Their collaboration resulted in a newly published limited-edition *Liberator*, which includes Nama's hand-colored etchings and Romero's evocative short story, published for the first time in this rare limited-edition of 35 numbered portfolios, and 10 artists' proofs, signed by both artists.

The exhibition of *Liberator* in New York and Los Angeles was conceived by Romero and Nama to celebrate their 60-year friendship. The exhibitions were originally planned to coincide with the anticipation of George Romero being honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. With Romero's death on July 16, 2017, the gallery exhibitions were, therefore, presented in memoriam.

GEORGE A. ROMERO



LIBERATOR

ETCHINGS
GEORGE A. NAMA

2013
MONUMENT PRESS
MONTAUK · NEW YORK

Samuel turned the lights on in the Rumpus Room. It was shortly after three a.m. Samuel had gone to lie down on his bed four times but had never been able to drop into the merciful oblivion of sleep. This was partly because he was old. Eighty-six. The aches and pains of age kept him awake. And fear kept him awake. Not the fear of death. He'd been free of *that* fear for some sixty-five years. Ever since he had positively proven that God actually did exist. Still, the main reason he couldn't sleep was because his doctors had told him that he only had weeks to live. He was afraid of what might happen to the children once he was gone.

You'd never know, by looking at him, that he was eighty-six. People who saw him on the street thought he was spry for a seventy-year-old. An obvious power remained in his arms and legs. The power of a man who had done physical labor most of his life.

He had been twenty-one years old when World War II ended. He had been found, by Allied troops, hunkering in a vegetable garden behind a cattle barn near Strasbourg, France. There was a large fire blazing in the garden. Samuel should have been delighted to meet his "liberators" but, oddly, he refused to join them until the fire had burned out completely.

Was he concealing evidence? Actually, yes he was. Had he committed some crime? That was a matter of opinion. In the eyes of the world, there had been worse crimes committed. Far worse.

Those, for example, that brutalized Samuel's people, the Jews.

He had believed, at the time, that their persecutors were evil. Or at least inspired by an evil force. All he ever did was strike back. In the only way he knew. A way that, in the end, strengthened his already near-rabbinical faith. Because, to his amazement, it worked.

Realizing that the enemy was closing in, Samuel had turned to his Lord God, and to an ancient Cabalistic text which, in the end, saved his life and the lives of two dozen others.

Samuel never married. Perhaps that's why he has always valued family highest among his blessings. Among the others "liberated" from behind that cattle barn were Samuel's mother and father, his three brothers, two sisters, and all of his nieces and nephews. They numbered twenty-six in all; Samuel identified them as members of his "tribe." There seemed to be something significant in his use of the word. "Tribe."

The so-called "liberators" who eventually arrived believed themselves, with the arrogance of most liberators, to be saviors of Samuel and his family. Had they examined things a bit more closely, they might have understood the improbability... (some would have called it an impossibility)... that twenty-six Jews, who had never done anything to disguise themselves, could have survived on a farm near Strasbourg through the most hazardous three years of the war. It simply could never have been. Not without some sort of protection. Fortunately, Samuel's "tribe" had all the protection they needed. They had the promised protection of the Most High.



SAMUEL

NAMA

LIBERATOR
George A. Romero

That fire in the garden? What sort of evidence might Samuel have been trying to destroy? Why would something done in God's Name need to be held in secret? Because the force behind it was strong enough to crush anyone... any *thing*... that stood in its way, including the one, or ones, who conjured it.

If it was conjured wrongly... out of greed, or for any other of self-serving purpose, as opposed to something that benefitted the community... (the "Tribe")... the conjurer himself, or herself, would be punished with "equivalence." If one were to wish for undeserved prosperity, one might be rewarded with poverty. If one were to wish that some harm be visited on a fellow who, in God's view, was undeserving of such harm, then the conjurer himself would be punished in a manner similar to that which he might have imagined for his victim. Should an accuser prescribe a specific punishment which, in God's estimation, is unwarranted, God will impart that very same punishment on the accuser.

Harsh? Yes. God's judgements are often harsh, or they seem so. Dicing with the Almighty has always been a dangerous game. Back during the war, Samuel had taken his chances. And, as it turned out, he and his family benefitted. Because there was nothing impure in Samuel's heart. Those who *he* saw as the enemies of his tribe were, in most people's judgement, on the wrong side of virtue.

Apparently the Lord God agreed with him.

In those three terrible years before "Liberation," God, through His Avenging Agent on Earth, chose frequently to intervene on Samuel's behalf. That's why he and his family were never found. In that time, while Samuel's "Tribe" was hiding in plain sight, a rash of hideous crimes ravaged the farmlands near Strasbourg. Most of the crimes were murders. Some were so brutal that they were thought to have been done by wild animals. Very *powerful* wild animals. One victim, a Nazi officer, was torn completely apart. His body was found, spread like some horrible marmalade, over a field that stretched more than a hundred yards.

Eventually authorities reasoned that, since most of the victims were either German nationals or French sympathizers, the murders, which shockingly numbered thirty-two, must have been the work of the "Resistance" which was virulently active in the hills nearby.

Actually, there were *more* than thirty-two murders. There were fifty-four in all. Some of the victims appeared to have suffered accidents. Others were simply never found. Not that God's Avenging Agent ever gave a thought to covering His... (its)... tracks. Circumstances sometimes sent a victim to the bottom of the river. Once a woman's corpse turned up in northern Italy. It had been jammed into a truck. It was found to be so badly mutilated that it couldn't be identified. Once again, wild animals were blamed.

Over the years, Samuel became more and more confident that the Lord had found no fault with his methods. That, in the end, his cause must have been a just one. Because the Avenger had never turned against *him*.

LIBERATOR
George A. Romero



'THAT FIRE IN THE GARDEN?'

NAMA

The Thing he had set ablaze the day the "Liberators" arrived was, in fact, the Avenging Agent itself... (Himself?). As instructed by those Cabalistic texts, Samuel had taken the life out of it first, then set it ablaze. He couldn't help but feel pangs of guilt. Even though he had taken its life, he couldn't help but think of it as... well... the *real* "Liberator." A sort of guardian angel, called a Golem, that had seen him and his "Tribe" through the worst of all days. Now, the war was over. The Creature had no further purpose. The same "Book of Lights" that had taught Samuel how to give it life had taught him how to take it away. He prayed that that was somehow an act of mercy. His gratitude made it seem important that he try to be as merciful as possible.

The ancient craft which Samuel had used was not an obscure one. Amazingly, to this day, instructions can be found in texts that appear in most Jewish bookstores. Anyone can find these instructions. Anyone can construct God's Avenger. Most people have never tried. Most probably believe that it's just a lot of hocus-pocus. Back during the war, Samuel, faced with what he believed would be certain death at the hands of the Nazis, decided that there was nothing to lose. So he followed the Lord God's instructions. He constructed a Golem using river mud that he had harvested.

Three years later Samuel, with heavy heart, found himself destroying The Thing. As incapable as it was of feeling pain, it was just as incapable of feeling dejection, or any sort of rancor. It had no survival instincts. Losing its life had no more meaning to the creature than if it had lost a shirt button. Of course. He... [it]... had no buttons. When Samuel had first crafted the thing, he hadn't bothered to incorporate details like buttons. All that had mattered at the time was that the Creature had arms. Legs. Hands for tearing things apart. In appropriate locations on The Thing's head, Samuel had made clumsy indentations that loosely resembled eyes. These were basically just holes made in the mud by Samuel's fingers. The Creature didn't at all *need* eyes. It could see quite clearly without them.

Then Samuel had carved letters into The Thing's chest. Letters that spelled the word "Life" in Hebrew. (To take its life away, he would later carve letters that translated to "No Life"... it was as simple as that.) As Samuel watched the Creature become animate... (how *amazed* he was when it *actually did*)... he felt a sort of guilt. He felt as if those false, unnecessary "eyes" were staring at him... staring all the way into him, all the way into his soul, as if he had done something terrible. He was overwhelmed by a certainty that the Creature was somehow trying to frighten him... warn him.

Then the Golem spoke. Or did it? Perhaps it only spoke into Samuel's mind. It was a warning. And Samuel dropped to his knees. "Beware," The Thing said. "Not every cause is just. Never call Me again. Never dare. For fear of your soul. Unless you are certain that your cause is just."

"I... I am certain."

"And so I will help you. But in days to come, be just as certain before you ask more."



LIBERATOR

NAMA

LIBERATOR
George A. Romero

In the end, when the war was over and Samuel set The Thing on fire, he cringed as he watched it burn, imagining pain that the Creature itself never felt. He almost expected it to scream. It never did. The only vocalizations came from the flames themselves. Popping. Cracking. Spitting little sparks quite unworthy of the Almighty force inside the belly of the blaze.

All of that happened many years ago.

Now, Samuel, having had no sleep, turned the light on in the Rumpus Room. The light made his heart feel heavy. Nearly as heavy as it had felt back in the war years.

The Rumpus Room was where he and his current family gathered several times a day. There were nine of them. Children, none older than twelve, who, for one reason or another, had been vomited out by the system. Samuel had been sheltering them for years now. It was entirely irregular. Technically illegal, in fact. Just as it was technically illegal for Samuel to be sheltering two dozen Jews during World War II. He saw little difference. He felt just as responsible for these children as he had felt for his nieces and nephews. They had become his new "Tribe."

Samuel looked at three large, open bins meant to hold toys. There were toys scattered all over the floor of the Rumpus Room but none at all in the bins. The bins were filled with modelling clay. What seemed like mountains of it. Samuel began to scoop out fistfuls of the stuff.

Modeling clay used to be sold in blocks, slightly larger than quarter-pound sticks of butter. Samuel had been buying them all his life. He remembered when they were a nickel apiece. Remembered when the price jumped up to a dime. Then to fifteen cents. Twenty. And eventually up to a quarter. Sometime before it hit fifty cents, he stopped buying. He felt that he had plenty. Just under two hundred pounds. More than enough to build something the size of a man.

Modeling clay was available in three colors, red, green and yellow. None of these colors lived up to their reputations. The green looked like pea soup, the yellow like deli mustard, and the red was only slightly brighter than rust. Whenever the children wanted to use the clay to sculpt something, they would normally scoop out fistfuls of it, just as Samuel had done, and when they were finished, press the stuff back into the bins. Over time, once the clay had been pushed, pressed and squeezed onto itself, the colors blended and it was impossible to separate them. So all of the children's sculptures were streaked with variegated smears of those dull, indistinct colors.

An alarm clock rang somewhere in the house. Eight a.m. One at a time, the children got out of bed. They made their separate ways into the Rumpus Room where Samuel would normally be waiting with some sort of breakfast. This particular morning Samuel was waiting with something else...

... a full-sized man that he had crafted out of modeling clay, its flesh streaked with variegated smears of dull, indistinct colors.



"TRIBE"

NAMA

LIBERATOR
George A. Romero

Samuel told the children that he was dying. There were tears. Fears. He told them how God had protected him in the war. He told them that this man of clay would protect *them* in much the same way.

And, of course, he warned them. His voice didn't have the dynamic power of the voice he believed he had once heard. . . . *"Not every cause is just. Never call me again. Never dare. For fear of your end. Unless you are certain that your cause is just."* . . . but he spoke the words as solemnly as he could. The children listened. Unfortunately they only heard what they wanted to hear. They didn't have the benefit of having suffered in a war. They didn't have that sort of automatic wisdom. None spoke the thought, but each of them secretly saw in the Golem a path to a much more comfortable future.

Samuel pressed on, teaching them how to give the Golem life, and teaching them how to take it away. No one listened to that part. How to take it away. They believed they had been blessed, yes, but by a Genie rather than a God. They had visions of gold close on the horizon.

When the time came, Samuel carved letters into the clay man's chest and gave The Thing birth.

Less than three weeks later Samuel went to meet the God that had once provided him with "liberation." At the moment of his death, he seemed to hear words in his head again. *"The ones you left behind? They may not rise. They do not have faith. Faith is what enables us to live without lies."*

The ones left behind, Samuel's children, his "Tribe," gathered in the Rumpus Room where the clay man was lying silently. One of the boys, named James, spoke irreverently to The Thing. "Hey, Frankenstein, how about you go out there and score a million bucks? For each of us!"

The Golem slowly turned its head and "looked" at James. It had no eyes, only that pair of indentations made by Samuel's fingers, but it "looked" directly at James. Then it stood up on the lumps of clay that were its feet. And a moment later it began to walk toward the boy.

"No," James shouted. "No!"

The other boys tried to approach the Golem, thinking to carve the words "No Life" in its chest. The Golem swept them away with mighty arms.

James ran, and ran, and ran, fearing all the while . . . knowing all the while . . . that the Golem would follow him . . .

. . . possibly until the end of time.

Meanwhile, Samuel, in his after-life, was sleeping peacefully, believing that he had left things perfectly in order.

LIBERATOR
George A. Romero



COLOPHON

This portfolio is a collaboration consisting of seven
etchings printed on Arches Vellin paper to accompany
an original short story © by George A. Romero.
First edition.

The text in handset and Linotype Mellor types was
printed by Darrell Hyder, The Sun Hill Press,
North Brookfield, Massachusetts.
Bindings were made by Jim DiMarcantonio,
Hope Bindery, Providence, Rhode Island.
Etchings printed by Kathy Caraccio.

All prints are signed and hand colored by the artist George Nama
and all copies are signed by the author
in an edition of thirty-five copies numbered 1 - 35.

Ten additional sets are artist's proofs
numbered A.P. 1 - A.P. 10

This is copy



George A. Romero



'AVENGER' II

NAMA

20. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

GARDEN, NO. 7, related to the artist book *Liberator*, short story by George Romero (2013), 2017

Gouache, charcoal, and collage on antique paper. 40 × 50 in. (102 × 127 cm). Signed at lower right in ink: NAMA. Inscribed at lower left in ink: GARDEN #7.

PROVENANCE:

The studio of the artist



21. **NAMA, George** (b. Homestead, PA, near Pittsburg 1939)
American School

GARDEN, NO. 8, related to the artist book *Liberator*, short story by George Romero (2013), 2017

Gouache, charcoal, and collage on antique paper. 40 × 50 in. (102 × 127 cm). Signed at lower right in ink: *NAMA*. Inscribed at lower left in ink: *GARDEN #8*.

PROVENANCE:

The studio of the artist



REIGL, Judit (Kapuvár, Hungary 1923 – 2020 Marcoussis, France)**Hungarian School**

Judit Reigl was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest in 1941¹ where she studied under István Szónyi (1894 – 1960), a painter, printmaker and a notable member of the Nagybánya artist colony following World War I. After the end of World War II, Reigl returned to the Academy to finish her studies. In October 1946, Reigl, along with a group of friends, left Budapest to study at the Hungarian Academy of Art in Rome. Later in 1947, on a trip to Ravenna, she met Betty Anderson (1911 – 2007), an English artist who studied under the sculptor Henry Moore (1898 – 1986). In 1948, Reigl returned to Hungary, believing her mother to be ill.² Just days later, restrictions on travelling beyond the Iron Curtain were enforced and she was required to surrender her passport, cutting her off from the west.³ On March 10, 1950, Reigl made a successful attempt to flee the Soviet bloc—the ninth such attempt—for France, where she would make her home until her death in 2020.⁴ Arriving in Paris in June of 1950 at the age of 27, she was welcomed by a large community of Hungarian artists and others, including Anderson, with whom she would share her life until the former's death in 2007.⁵

Four years later in May 1954, Reigl met André Breton (1896 – 1966) through Simon Hantaï (1922 – 2008), a Hungarian artist who had fled Hungary in 1948.⁶ Breton was most impressed by Reigl's art and organized her first solo exhibition later that year at the Galerie à l'étoile scellée in Paris.⁷

In 1955, Reigl transitioned from a Bretonian style of Surrealism towards abstraction and started what came to be known as the *Mass Writing* period. It consisted of four subseries: *Outburst [Eclatements]*, from 1955 – 1958⁸; *Center of Dominance [Centres de dominance]*, from 1958 – 1959⁹; *Mass Writing [Ecriture en masse]*, from 1959 – 1965¹⁰; and finally, *Weightlessness [Expérience d'apesanteur]*, from 1965 – 1966.¹¹ The broader *Mass Writing* series is one aspect of a larger process that lasted throughout her career; her work is one continuous *oeuvre*, one series organically developing out of another. Out of *Mass Writing*, Reigl started working on a more figurative body of work in the series *Man* that lasted from 1965 until 1972. In 1973, this series evolved into *Decoding*, before she once again abandoned figuration for the “automatic-writing-as-drawing”¹² series *Unfolding [Déroulement]*. *Unfolding* makes up a substantial part of Reigl's oeuvre, lasting initially from 1973 until 1980. *Unfolding Continued [Suite de déroulement]*, a progression of *Unfolding*, continued until 1985. Deviating multiple times into other series, Reigl

returned to *Unfolding* one final time from 2008 – 2010.

Today, her work can be found in museums and institutions across Europe and North America. Reigl has had over 100 solo exhibitions since 1954 and countless group exhibitions at galleries, museums and other institutions across the globe. Her first exhibition at Shepherd W&K Galleries, *Judit Reigl: Entrance-Exit* (1968 – 1989), was in 2013 and was shown concurrently with an exhibition featuring works of the same period, in Vienna at our sister gallery, W&K (Wienerroither & Kohlbacher) in *Judit Reigl: Entrée-Sortie*. In 2018, Shepherd W&K Galleries exhibited work from her final series *Dance of Death*.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Panta Rei (Judit Reigl or The Origin of a World)*, exh. cat., published in connection with the exhibition *Judit Reigl: "Unfolding" Unfolding* (Ubu Gallery, 2010), 15.
- 2 Janos Gat, "Judit Reigl: Artist Biography," Janos Gat Gallery, n.d., 7, <https://janosgatgallery.com/downloads/reigl-bio-en.pdf>.
- 3 "'Unfolding': A Conversation between Jean-Paul Ameline and Judit Reigl," *Art in America* online (April 3, 2009), reproduced in its entirety on Le Fonds de Dotation Judit Reigl website, <https://www.judit-reigl.com/en/entretien-2008-jp-ameline/>.
- 4 Sarah Wilson, "Judit Reigl Obituary," *The Guardian* (August 19, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/aug/19/judit-reigl-obituary>.
- 5 Gat, "Judit Reigl: Artist Biography," 8.
- 6 "'Unfolding': A Conversation between Jean-Paul Ameline and Judit Reigl."
- 7 *Judit Reigl*, Galerie À l'étoile scellée, Paris, November 19 – December 6, 1954.
- 8 Marcia E. Vetrocq, "between two states but belonging to none: The Paintings of Judit Reigl," *Judit Reigl: Entrée-Sortie*, exh. cat, ed. Eberhard Kohlbacher and Aloiz M. Wienerroither (W&K Edition, 2013), 26, https://www.w-k.art/publications/judit_reigl_entree-sortie.
- 9 Ibid., 28.
- 10 Ibid., 29.
- 11 Ibid., 32.
- 12 Robert Pincus-Witten, "Reviews: Judit Reigl, Ubu Gallery," *Artforum* 49, no 7 (March 2011): 264, <https://www.artforum.com/events/judit-reigl-195666/>.

22. **REIGL, Judit** (Kapuvár, Hungary 1923 – 2020 Marcoussis, France)
Hungarian School

MASS WRITING [*Ecriture en masse*], 1964

Oil on canvas. 55 × 68 ½ in. (139.7 × 174 cm).

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist;

Collection du Fonds de dotation Judit Reigl, Paris, France, acquired from the artist, inv. no. (0579P) (EM-1964-01);

Private Collection, New York, from 2021.

EXHIBITIONS:

2018 *Judit Reigl: Weightlessness*, Ubu Gallery, New York, September 28, 2018 – February 16, 2020, cat. no. 9.

The third and most comprehensive phase of the larger *Mass Writing* [*Ecriture en masse*] period, the works in Reigl's *Mass Writing* series from 1959 to 1965, are nothing short of monumental, both in size and execution. As in the present painting, a black mass of paint is applied in sweeping gestures across a blank white canvas. In an interview with the curator Jean-Paul Ameline for *Art in America* in 2009, she describes her method: "I bought some material used by masons: a black substance that dries slowly, from within, over years; this way I could work on six to eight canvases at a time. Starting with a white background, I applied globs of paint to the canvas with a rounded flexible blade or at times with a plain wooden rod, and I spread it upwards from the bottom to the top, using this black mass to cover the lighter colors laid underneath."¹ By 1965, Reigl began to invert the negative and positive space found in *Mass Writing* and soon developed the series *Weightlessness* [*Expérience d'apesanteur*].

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort



ENDNOTES

1 Judith Reigl quoted in “Unfolding’: A Conversation between Jean-Paul Ameline and Judith Reigl,” *Art in America* online (April 3, 2009), reproduced in its entirety on Le Fonds de Dotation Judith Reigl website, <https://www.judit-reigl.com/en/entretien-2008-jp-ameline/>.

23. **REIGL, Judit** (Kapuvár, Hungary 1923 – 2020 Marcoussis, France)
Hungarian School

FLIGHT, 1965

Ink on paper. 30 ¼ × 24 ⅞ in. (76.8 × 63.2 cm). Signed and dated at lower right: *Reigl 1965*.

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist;

Maurice Goreli Collection, Paris and Versailles;

Private Collection, New York.

EXHIBITIONS:

2018 *Judit Reigl: Weightlessness*, Ubu Gallery, New York, September 28, 2018 – February 16, 2020, cat. no. 8, here titled “Untitled.”



24. **REIGL, Judit** (Kapuvár, Hungary 1923 – 2020 Marcoussis, France)
Hungarian School

WEIGHTLESSNESS [*Expérience d'apesanteur*], 1966

Oil on canvas. 35 ½ × 45 ½ in. (88 × 115.6 cm).

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist;

Private Collection, New York.

EXHIBITIONS:

1992 *Judit Reigl*, Musée de Brou, Bourg-en-Bresse, March 2 – April 12, 1992, cat. no. 17.

2018 *Judit Reigl: Weightlessness*, Ubu Gallery, New York, September 28, 2018 – February 16, 2020, cat. no. 3.

After gradually increasing the size of her paintings in the 1960s, Reigl started to create works of an “uncharacteristically intimate” nature and smaller in size after suffering injury from a hit-and-run accident that immobilized her right hand and arm in 1965. The “limited” series *Weightlessness* [*Expérience d'apesanteur*] and *Writing After Music* [*Écritures d'après musique*] were created during her time of recovery when even the simplest of physical tasks for the artist needed to be relearned.¹ According to the dealer and close friend of Reigl, Janos Gat, the *Weightlessness* series of 1965 – 1966—the last and final phase of her *Mass Writing* period—Reigl used gravity as a tool to “reinforce the effect of upward flow.”² Heavily applying a thick impasto, Reigl then turned the canvas upside down to dry. When she reoriented the work, a counter gravitational effect would then add a dynamism to the sagging and dripping paint, creating a seemingly antigravitational appearance and texture.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort



ENDNOTES

¹ Janos Gat, *Experiencing Reigl's Weightlessness* (Janos Gat Gallery, 2018), 3, https://www.ubugallery.com/pdf/Revised_Weightlessness.pdf.

² Ibid., 1.

25. **REIGL, Judit** (Kapuvár, Hungary 1923 – 2020 Marcoussis, France)
Hungarian School

UNFOLDING [*Déroulement*], 2010

Ink on paper. 24 × 51 in. (61 × 129.5 cm)..

PROVENANCE:

Studio of the artist;

Private Collection, New York.

EXHIBITIONS:

2010 *Judit Reigl: “Unfolding” Unfolding*, Ubu Gallery, New York, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, December 10, 2010 – March 12, 2011.

LITERATURE:

2010 *Panta Rei (Judit Reigl or The Origin of a World)*, exh. cat., published in connection with the exhibition *Judit Reigl: “Unfolding” Unfolding* (Ubu Gallery, 2010), 10, ill.

Judit Reigl’s first rendition of the *Unfolding (Déroulement)* series began in 1973 and lasted until 1980.¹ She reprised the series as *Unfolding Continued (Suite de Déroulement)* from 1980 until 1985.² This series evolved into others, including *Entrance/Exit [Entrée-Sortie]*, which was featured in her first solo show at Shepherd W&K Galleries in 2013.³ In 2008, Reigl came full circle and returned to the series *Unfolding* she had started more than 40 years previously. She worked on this until 2010, the year the present painting, *Unfolding*, was created. In 2010 – 2011, Ubu Gallery and Rooster Gallery, both of New York, launched simultaneous exhibitions around these new works on paper.⁴ A video provided by Janos Gat Gallery documenting her work accompanied the exhibitions where the viewer sees an aged Reigl on her hands and knees working across long reams of paper with an inked sponge in her gloved hands.⁵ In her “automatic-writing-as-drawing”⁶ work, it appears as if she is writing some indecipherable script known only to herself. It is an ink story that “unfolds” across the paper. These works on paper are an extension of her series of *Ecriture d’après musique* from 1965 to 1966 on a grandiose scale. Her process is



raw and labor intensive. The paper is wrinkled from the ferocity with which she spreads the ink, applying all her weight on her hands and knees as she drags the sponge across the paper.

Kaitlin Anne Vervoort

ENDNOTES

- 1 “1973-80 | Series: ‘Unfolding,’” Le Fonds de Dotation Judit Reigl, updated 2023, <https://www.judit-reigl.com/en/1973-85-deroulement/>.
- 2 “1980-85 | ‘Unfolding Continued’ Period,” Le Fonds de Dotation Judit Reigl, updated 2023, <https://www.judit-reigl.com/en/1976-85-suite-de-deroulement/>.
- 3 *Judit Reigl: Entrance–Exit (1986 – 89)*, Shepherd W&K Galleries, New York, Fall 2013 (October 30 – December 14, 2013), <https://shepherdgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/reigl-2013.pdf>.
- 4 *Judit Reigl: “Unfolding” Unfolding*, Ubu Gallery, New York, in association with Janos Gat Gallery, New York, December 10, 2010 – March 12, 2011, <https://www.ubugallery.com/exhibition/judit-reigl-unfolding-unfolding/>; *Judit Reigl, New Works on Paper*, Rooster Gallery, New York, January 13 – February 12, 2011.
- 5 Janos Gat, dir., *Judit Reigl: Chinese Ink on Paper*, filmed by Nikhil Melnechuk and Dmitriy Rozin, realized on January 22 – 23, 2010, <https://www.judit-reigl.com/en/video/5-judit-reigl-chinese-ink-on-paper-janos-gat-gallery-new-york-2010/>.
- 6 Robert Pincus-Witten, “Reviews: Judit Reigl, Ubu Gallery,” *Artforum* 49, no 7 (March 2011): 264, <https://www.artforum.com/events/judit-reigl-195666/>.

INDEX OF ARTISTS REPRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

CHENG, Ching Ho (1946 – 1989), cat. nos. 1, 2

GEDŮ, Ilka (1921 – 1985), cat. no. 3, 4, 5

LAZARUS, Sidney (1912 – 1973), cat. nos. 6, 7

MILLEKER, Elizabeth J. (b. 1935), cat. nos. 8, 9, 10, 11

NAMA, George (b. 1939), cat. nos. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

REIGL, Judit (1923 – 2020), cat. nos. 22, 23, 24, 25

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