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BATUZ INTERRELATION OF FORMS

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B A T U Z

MUSEU DE ARTE DE SÃO PAULO

ASSIS CHATEAUBRIAND

São Paulo

Maio 1978



Museu de Arte de São Paulo
Assis Chateaubriand

Introdução

por Prof. Pietro M. Bardi

Batuz vem ao Brasil para apresentar suas últimas telas pintadas nos Estados Unidos, para onde se transferiu, há alguns anos, da Argentina.

Conhecido como um ajeitador de manchas, calculadíssimas, heraldicamente inscritas em retângulos, compondo combinações de agradáveis zonas coloridas ritmadas em contrastes harmoniosos, Batuz se destaca no conjunto dos numerosos preparadores abstracionicos.

Estamos na presença de um comunicador de formas reduzidas a espaço-simbolos, diria estruturas em consonância jogando eurrítmicamente uma em função da outra, conseguindo persuasiva unidade.

Pintura a ser encarada, apesar da extrema simplicidade, com atenção para descobrir os moventes poéticos que a substanciam.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Bardi'.

Prof. Pietro M. Bardi

São Paulo, 1977

Introduction

by Prof. Pietro M. Bardi

Batuz has come to Brazil to present his latest paintings, produced in the United States where he has been residing for several years, after leaving Argentina.

Known as an artisan of calculated heraldic forms, inscribed in rectangles and forming combinations of pleasant rhythmic colors in harmonious contrast, Batuz has become one of the most important artists of Abstractionism.

We are in the presence of a communicator of forms reduced to space-symbols, or rather structures playing eurhythmically one against the other, achieving a persuasive unity.

Paintings to be faced attentively, in their extreme simplicity, they will reveal the poetic motivation of their substance.



Prof. Pietro M. Bardi

São Paulo, 1977



O arista e seu meio

por Rafael Squirru

A relação entre o artista e o seu meio é um aspecto muito importante do processo criativo. Porque haveria Gauguin de viajar até as ilhas dos Mares do Sul, senão para nos oferecer o melhor e mais forte exemplo do seu gênio plástico, ou como poderemos explicar que nenhum pintor jamais atingira a hispanidade de El Greco, o grego, como seu próprio nome denota? Em relação à arte de Batuz, acredito seja válido nos determos naquilo que diz respeito ao seu desenvolvimento estético.

Conheci Batuz nos dias em que ele batalhava em Villa Gesell (lugar de veraneio ao sul de Buenos Aires), compartilhando com ele os anseios dos seus sonhos, que o levaram a projetar sua caverna sob forma de estúdio, a modelar esculturas estranhas e quase aterradoras, a atacar espaços de compensado com cores sintéticas que tentavam, de algum modo, libertar sua energia indomável.

Ainda, parecia-me que alguma coisa estava faltando.

Era difícil dizer o que era, delimitar o problema.

Batuz assemelhava um gigante atrapado na rede.

Senti alívio o dia em que ele manifestara sua decisão de tentar fortuna como artista, emigrando junto com sua família para os Estados Unidos.

Após minha própria experiência de sete anos no lugar mencionado, posso afirmar junto ao grande poeta cubano José Martí: "Eu morei dentro de um monstro e conheço suas entranhas". Acredito seja este um símbolo tirado de Jonas e a baleia.

Acho que não foi pouca a proeza de ter passado por essa experiência, à qual sobrevivi espiritual e fisicamente, assimilando de modo enriquecedor valores vitais e altamente significativos.

Neste sentido, os Estados Unidos não dão lugar a muitas nuanças. Ou a pessoa sobrevive, aprendendo a incorporar os seus valores, ou sucumbe, para não mais levantar. Na América as pessoas realmente morrem (e vivem também), à diferença do sul, onde um profundo observador afirmara: Ninguém morre.

E este provavelmente o motivo pelo qual os americanos não gostam de falar a respeito da morte: é algo demasiadamente real para eles. A morte, o esquecimento, a derrota é algo que faria os americanos dizer: "Ele tem passado por muito", o que é um fato. Acredito ser este o outro lado do sonho americano, e que se mantém válido para muitos daqueles que não o atingiram, embora não possamos negar que há alguns que o conseguem.

A titânica energia de Batuz fez-me acreditar que ele pertencia à categoria daqueles poucos "escolhidos". Sua ambição de espaço, a soltura dos seus gestos, até os seus sapatos, tudo falava de um destino que podia se realizar apenas na terra dos arranha-céus.

O fator tamanho é importante nos Estados Unidos. Os edifícios são altos, as pessoas são altas, ou encorpadas, ou ambas as coisas, as pinturas são enormes, enfim, o espaço tem importância vital. Os artistas latinos têm a tendência a recluir o espaço, tendendo à intimidade onde murmuram suas confissões.

O espaço dos artistas americanos invade as telas e suas formas invadem o espaço, como fora apontado por Roy Slade, um inteligente observador do fenômeno artístico.



Batuz' studio in Villa Gesell

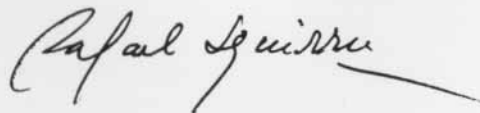
Os americanos descobriram que uma maior quantidade de vermelho torna o vermelho diferente em termos do espaço que ele cobre.

Do modo como eu imaginara, a arte de Batus encontrou finalmente sua verdadeira dimensão. Suas formas tornaram-se mais definidas. E sua personalidade marcante achou o tipo de eco para a qual esta moldada.

Os labirintos podem ser adequados na cultura de Borges, e sua elaboração os torna inteligíveis para o público americano, mas eles não poderiam nunca traduzir o tipo de intensidade de um Henry Miller ou Faulkner ou Muhammad Ali. Nascido na Hungria, Batus sem dúvida aprendeu algumas coisas durante sua longa permanência na Argentina, mas o encontro definitivo consigo mesmo teve lugar do lado dos Motherwells, dos Downings, dos Gilliams, e dos Nolands, aos quais ele realmente pertence.

E uma boa novidade que um novo artista tenha aparecido no cenário artístico americano.

Este não é um caso de transplante. E mais um caso do tipo do casamento de Gauguin ou El Greco com as respectivas terras de sua escolha. E pertinente que a crítica de arte celebre o mais feliz de todos estes encontros.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Rafael Squirru'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rafael Squirru

Buenos Aires, 1976



O trabalho de Batuz, pintor húngaro, posteriormente argentino, e finalmente norteamericano, vincula-se de algum modo a uma meia dúzia de pintores americanos. Mesmo assim, este relacionamento serve-lhe apenas como passaporte artístico, onde as afinidades já foram apontadas por Rafael Squirru em outras páginas. Porém, o relacionamento mais importante para o trabalho de Batuz não reside nos novos patrícios do artista, mas nos modernos pioneiros do seu continente de origem, especialmente na arte do início do século XX em Paris.

Naqueles dias distantes, que hoje assemelham à Idade de Ouro (apesar de não ser visto assim pelas pessoas da época), Picasso e Braque começaram experimentando com colagem e com o uso de objetos reunidos e pintados.

Braque, que pertencia a uma família de decoradores, incorporou à sua arte certos efeitos de papel; Picasso traduziu seus ensamblamentos de objetos num material artístico permanente feito de bronze batido.

Algumas décadas mais tarde, Matisse, o terceiro desse gigantes pioneiros, doente e vencido pela idade, acabou sua longa e brilhante carreira sentado na cama recortando papéis coloridos.

Batuz também usara, de modo peculiar e servindo aos seus propósitos, efeitos de pedaços de papel cortado ou rasgado e, assim como Picasso, transpôs este meio transitório num de caráter permanente, no óleo da tela.

Batuz na realidade não "pinta" com papéis: ele pinta com tintas; mas o efeito, especialmente quando visto na reprodução da página impressa, do modo como aparece nesta publicação, sugere geralmente formas obtidas com papel rasgado, colocando-as uma encima das outras, e deslocando-as até atingir uma espécie de "equilíbrio" oculto, não geométrico e imensurável. Invariavelmente, as pinturas de Batuz atingem esse equilíbrio e convencem ao espectador que uma sombra à esquerda ou à direita do quadro não corresponderia, e que qualquer mudança nas relações entre as cores, sem necessariamente alterar a natureza das próprias cores, poderia ser fatal.

O que tem sido procurado e atingido é uma perfeição formal admirável a causa de seu caráter irredutível a uma análise racional ou geométrica.

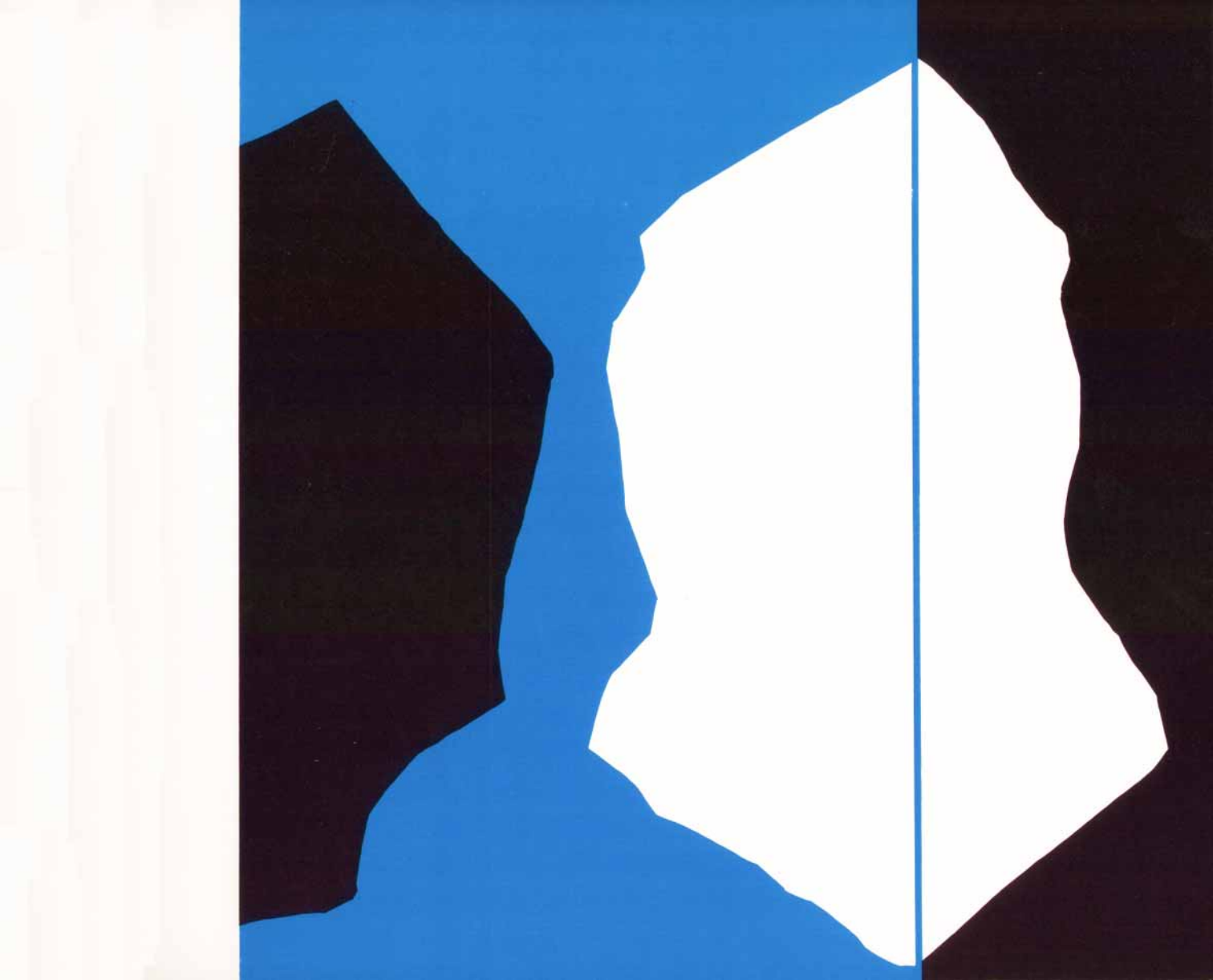
Assim como a música de Bach, as pinturas de Mondrian por exemplo podem ser analisadas quantitativamente como sendo a chave das fontes de sua qualidade.

As pinturas de Batuz desafiam tais análises, chegando porém ao mesmo tipo de inevitabilidade.

Frank Getlein



Washington, D.C., 1977



Numa sociedade democrática, os benefícios sociais do indivíduo são considerados um dado de fato.

Isto é certamente válido para a Europa e para o seu pensamento social, que se manifestou através de vários sistemas. Esta integração dentro de uma estrutura aumenta a possibilidade de uma adesão positiva, ao mesmo tempo que torna mais difícil a ausência de compromisso por parte do indivíduo. Apaga-se assim o sentido do extraordinário.

Este problema já fora discutido repetidas vezes a partir da *Nora* de Ibsen. Mesmo assim, ainda é estranho para gente de pensamento tradicional.

No filme de Bergman "*Cenas de um Casamento*", que reflete as confusões de nossa sociedade dentro de uma esfera privada, a heroína afirma, num balanço de sua vida: "Se a gente quiser comprar a segurança externa, isto exige um preço alto: especialmente o fato de aceitar a contínua destruição da personalidade". Ela chega a discernir a perda da identidade não mais na pobreza e na doença, mas nas convenções e compromissos que podem obstruir as possibilidades individuais da vida e as chances de experiência e realização do "eu".

De acordo com certas perspectivas sociológicas, nosso século liberou-se cada vez mais da natureza e criou um meio cultural com suas convenções próprias. Nós hoje estamos preparados para exigir de nós mesmos um desenvolvimento maior, assim como uma maior auto-determinação, mais satisfações de ordem sensual, mais alegria.

E é particularmente na esfera das artes que estas possibilidades por excelência se localizam. A partir daqui, a sociedade pode esperar novos impulsos - sejam eles de ordem geral ou particular, eles serão com certeza exemplares.

Muitos observadores da arte de hoje em dia, deixam de lado uma tendência predominante nas artes, que é o estilo geralmente aceito, e do qual podem se descartar como se fosse um objeto velho e inútil e que na melhor das hipóteses é lembrado como coisa do passado. Acredito que estejamos vivendo uma época que no futuro será considerada válida para as artes, já que tem ocorrido novamente uma abertura.

Nossa sociedade de hoje em dia não está à procura de ideais de curta duração, tentando inquirir sobre a sua própria natureza, tentando fazer um retrato do seu meio, seus recursos, suas possibilidades e perspectivas.

Isto não implica necessariamente no fato de estarmos vivendo uma época particularmente brilhante, ou passando por anos felizes. Mas significa com toda certeza que estamos novamente preparados para levar a sério a expressão individual dos nossos semelhantes, sem pressões internas ou externas, aceitando-os e talvez compreendendo-os também.

O nosso século produziu uma arte que evita de longe o clássico desenvolvimento histórico, no sentido progressista. A energia dos artistas por uma expressão artística, e sua luta por uma articulação individualizadora, tem produzido uma simultaneidade multiforme de possibilidades exclusivas.

No nosso século, Kandinsky deu os passos decisivos em direção a uma imagem abstrata: da reprodução para a imagem evocativa.

Em oposição lógica, o objeto tem sido discutido com frequência desde Duchamp.

Apesar das grandes diferenças nos contextos individuais, nacionais e internacionais da arte, os grandes artistas têm um elemento em comum: assumir o risco, procurar a aventura, quebrar as convenções, enfim, eles são a garantia das inovações enquanto sua arte for perturbadora.

Eles obstruem a administração total da arte, já que eles mesmos administram a criatividade. Deste modo, ele criam um espaço livre do qual nós - que não somos artistas - dependemos, se não quisermos perecer dentro de um mundo bem estruturado, mas maçante.

II

Acredito que estas observações tenham muito a ver com Batuz e sua arte.

Batuz é um caso exemplar da procura pela auto-realização.

Batuz nunca evitou os conflitos ou confrontamentos com as convenções, nem nos reflexos de suas próprias raízes.

Batuz é o cidadão do mundo, o filósofo e o pintor autodidata de qualidade profissional. (Justamente os artistas autodidatas, que não se ativeram a uma tradição acadêmica, foram os que influenciaram decididamente a arte do nosso século).

Batuz é o pesquisador que transforma a nova experiência imediatamente em arte.

Batuz fica insatisfeito com o mundo pré-formulado (e ele está familiarizado com os mais variados continentes).

Mas Batuz é também o homem ativo, aquele que está positivamente em formação. Batuz constrói para si sua própria casa, anticonvencional, à diferença da "arquitetura de verdade". Batuz procura para si seu meio específico; ele busca uma nova simbiose com o mundo. Mas Batuz não subjuga-se ao mundo. Ele tenta mudá-lo, melhorá-lo; Batuz procura a alegria. Há em Batuz algo de sonhador utópico, algo que nós precisamos, e que requisitamos constantemente, quanto mais submersos estejamos nas estruturas, e quanto mais formos administrados.

Batuz procura, acha e oferece o júbilo, e a experiência fantástica do novo e do criativo.

Batuz se expressa em pintura, em escultura, em artes gráficas.

Batuz não é introvertido.

Batuz é comunicativo.

Batuz entende sua arte como prova existencial de sua vida e dos seus pensamentos.

Batuz pensa irrestritamente.
Batuz pertence, junto à sua arte, a uma longa tradição.
Batuz entende a arte não apenas como mera decoração.
Batuz é uma aventura para Batuz e para nós.
A arte de Batuz é uma experiência profunda e sensual.
E bom aceitar o desafio de Batuz, pois Batuz ilumina nosso mundo ao poetiza-lo.

III

Um passo decisivo para a arte de Batuz foi sua imigração aos EUA. Batuz achou seu caminho. Achou sua própria escritura, que será posteriormente desenvolvida. Os trabalhos norteamericanos de Batuz são livres, generosos, grandes, monumentais. Eles testemunham um espírito livre, fantasioso e cheio de convicção.

E Paul Klee quem diz em suas "Confissões Criativas" de 1920: "A arte não reproduz o visível; pelo contrário, torna visível".

Batuz também produz o visível; seus quadros são confissões visuais.

Encontrei Batuz e sua arte um ano atrás. Estou perplexo. É uma experiência. Fico tomado pelas memórias; penso imediatamente em Paul Klee, no seu "tornar visível". Penso em Willi Baumeister e o "desconhecido na arte". Eu o comparo no campo da pintura a cores; faço a comparação entre a pintura européia e americana. Entendo rapidamente que Batuz é um europeu apaixonado pela América - aliás, que precisa da América. Sinto ainda uma alta qualidade na sua arte, uma qualidade que coloca imediatamente de lado a questão da nacionalidade. Mas como pode esta intensidade ser combinada com uma realidade tão grandiosa e simples ao mesmo tempo? A precisão com a poesia?

Mesmo assim, as novas pinturas de Batuz são exemplos admiráveis da arte americana. Batuz desenvolveu sua linguagem a partir de uma descrição do mundo das coisas em direção a liberdade; formas abstratas que expressam um sentimento essencial pela vida, e que

refletem a nova experiência de América. Nas suas próprias palavras: "Tornou-se cada vez mais claro para mim que América não é apenas um país ou uma nação, como tantos outros países, mas um estado anímico, um sentimento. Não apenas um grande país, mas uma outra dimensão — a dimensão da liberdade, com todo o seu sentido trágico e belo desta tremenda palavra".

Batuz capta as novas dimensões e formas de vida em formatos pequenos e grandes. Seu mundo das formas consiste em formulações autônomas, pinceladas, superfícies, contornos e cores de elementos positivos e negativos. As pinceladas são marcantes, e elas estão direcionadas pelo objeto.

Hoje não é mais necessário que o objeto se articule por si mesmo.

As linhas e superfícies expressam a topografia pessoal, a paisagem da vida do artista, suas experiências, suas derrotas, seus sucessos, suas tristezas, suas alegrias.

Elas não representam ações isoladas.

Nós não aprendemos nada de um evento isolado.

Batuz não narra nenhuma história, pois ele ama a verdade.

Nós vemos a soma total, o resultado, a abstração filosófica.

As linhas influenciam-se mutuamente, agindo umas por sobre as outras.

Elas refletem a vida humana.

IV

Esta nova mostra de Batuz unifica as experiências dos anos passados. Batuz abandonou definitivamente a relíquia realista. Ele se concentra totalmente na forma particular.

A técnica gráfica da serigrafia requer uma rigorosa precisão, evitando assim quaisquer resultados incidentais; é um modo de controlar o processo artístico que vai além do esboço ou da pintura.

Klee escreve o respeito: "A essência da arte gráfica seduz fácil e justificadamente em

direção à abstração. A qualidade esquemática e lendária da personalidade imaginária, presentifica-se e ao mesmo tempo se manifesta com grande precisão. Quanto mais puro for o trabalho gráfico, ou seja, quanta mais ênfase for colocada naqueles elementos formais que subjazem à descrição gráfica, mais deficiente vai-se tornar o equipamento para a descrição realista dos objetos visíveis... Os elementos formais da arte gráfica são: pontos — energia linear, espacial e de superfície”.

Batuz é um excelente artista gráfico.

As páginas individuais transmitem uma grande calma, uma calma orgânica, na qual o movimento aparece ancorado. O efeito recíproco das cores, o domínio de uma cor por sobre a outra, o jogo de linhas, e a modelagem das formas resultam em elementos livres que se agrupam e desmembram ou se reconstroem mutuamente, isolando-os para voltar a construir uma grande amálgama que respira liberdade.

Batuz emprega sua linguagem gráfica de modo parabólico; Batuz cria de modo exemplar um novo cosmos comparável à natureza, um cosmos que tornou-se agora um componente dialéctico do nosso mundo e do nosso conhecimento, que é uma pedra angular para uma ordem melhor e representa uma instrução para uma liberdade maior e mobilidade interna.



Dr. Dieter Ronte

Cologne, 1977



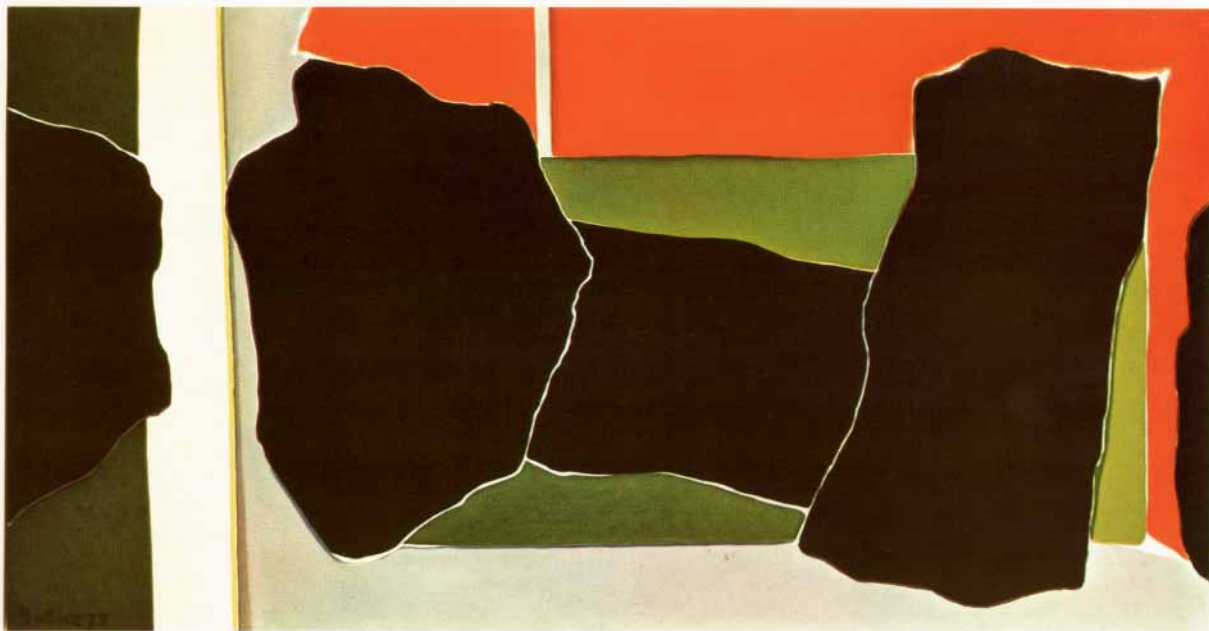
Following texts are excerpts from earlier published portfolios by the artist and from his notebooks.



Any painting, figurative or not, contemporary or from the past, is reducible (despite all other statements it contains) to the interaction of forces. It contains soft and hard lines, aggressive or passive colors, that are not arranged, as generally supposed, in (the technicality of) a certain compositional manner, but in response to an inner impulse of an intimate desire to place things the way organic particles or molecules are placed in matter.

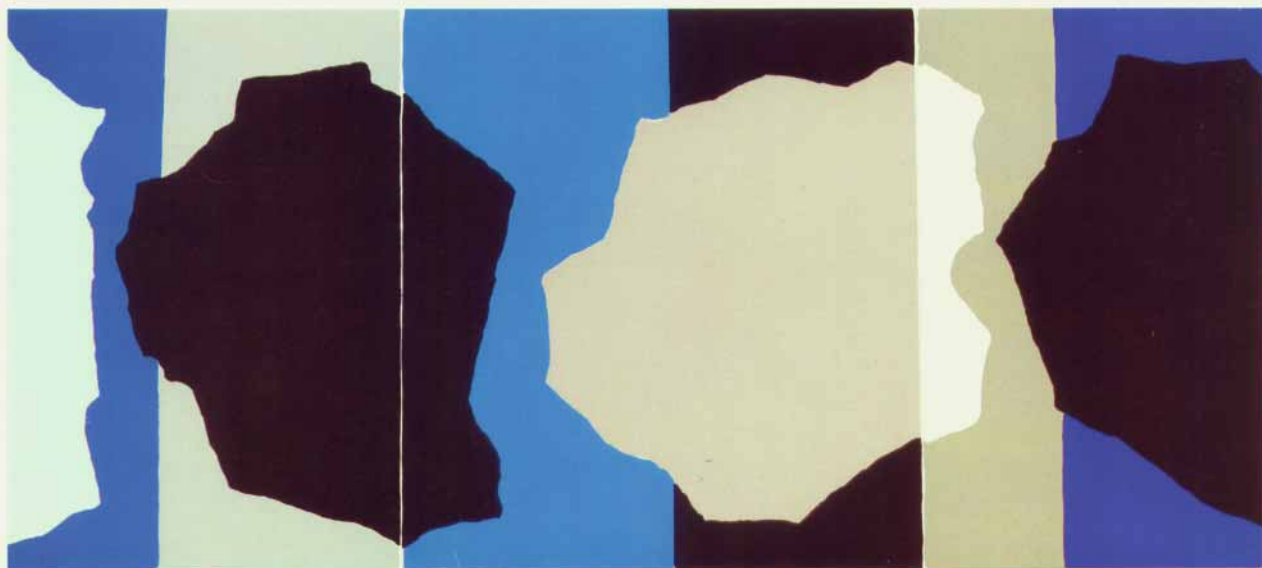
If the human mind's compositional manner differs from this, then perhaps in the most varied and complicated method, but never in its substance.

El Aleph
76" x 145" 193 x 369 cm.
1975. Oil on canvas
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Smithsonian Institution



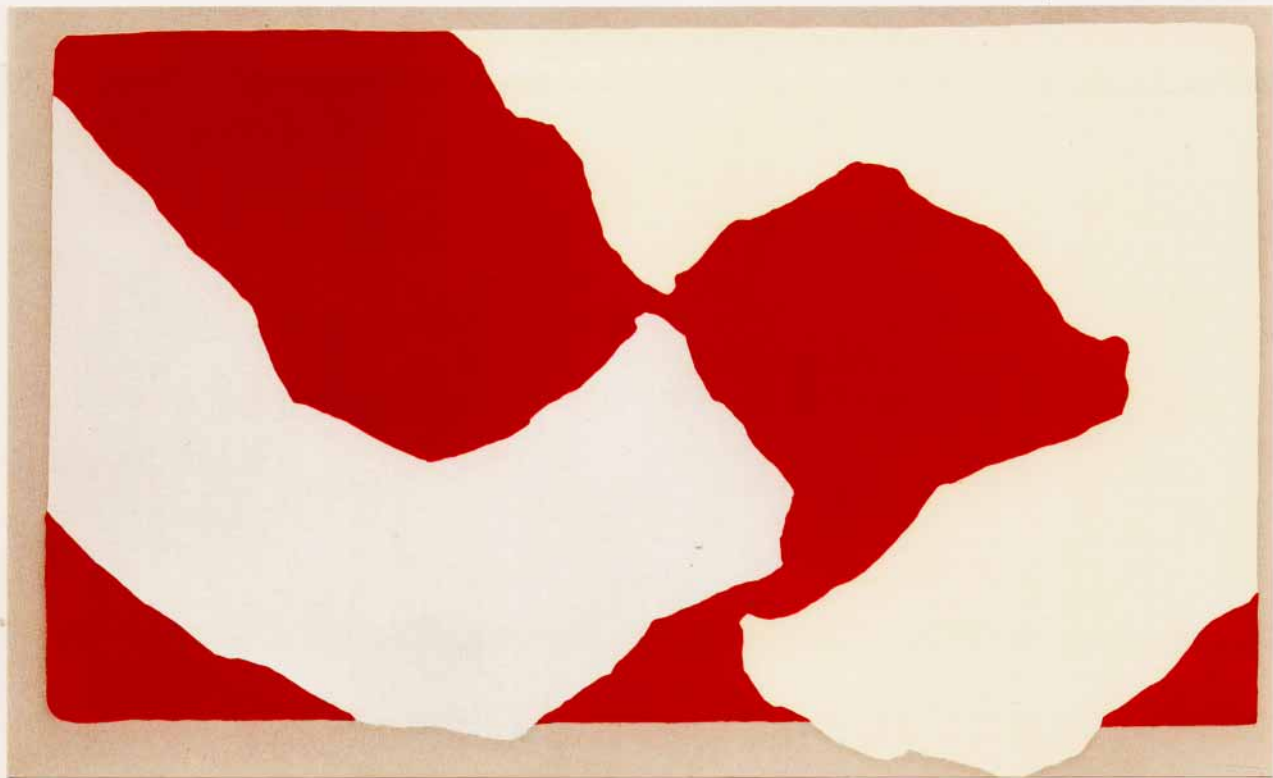
By "Polymorphic" I understand the capacity of one form to assume an unlimited variety of shapes. The surroundings, the color and the limitation of space alter not only the appearance of these shapes, but also makes them become something else. Yet, at the same time, they remain substantially the same.

Polymorphic (blue)
57" x 129" 145 x 327 cm.
1975. Oil on canvas



... each of these shapes is related to another shape or to the void, the no-thing ... sometimes to the negative which surrounds it, ... or becomes surrounded by it.

Toldi No. 5
74 1/2" x 123" 189 x 312 cm.
1976 Oil on canvas

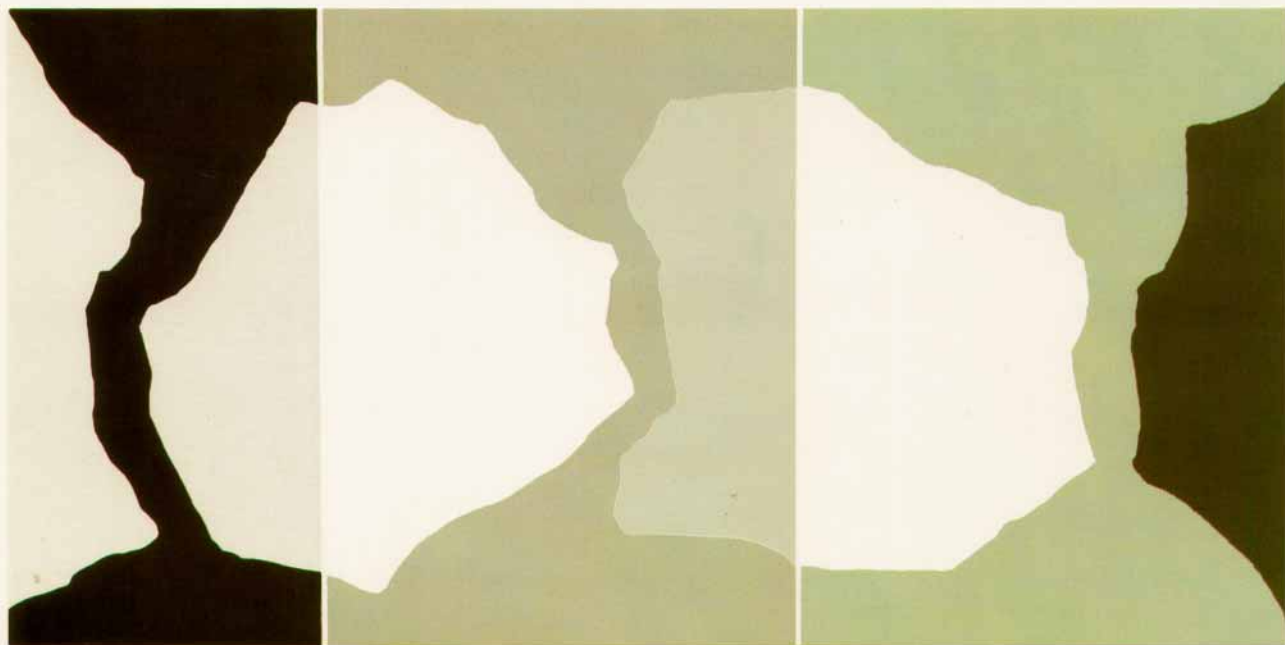


Make conscious the unconscious.

Light, movement, cubism, squares, color theories, have always been under investigation, but not the gestural painter's form-relationship, which in one moment works and in another does not. It is in a completely emotional stage.

This is the reason I draw my line carefully, study it, try to understand by observing each turn, each curve, inward or outward, and most important how that line meets with its opposite.

This is what I examine closely. For it is my purpose to investigate the intimate relation between forms and exclude the accidental. I believe that there must be an underlying physical, geometrical law that is ruling these forces.



If we enclose two spaces with two lines, our attention is directed to each of the resultant forms which the independent lines enclose. These become the positive forms and the space which remains between them is the negative space, whose form depends on the interrelation of the two others.

A line adopts another function when it is alone. In this case it has to define by itself the negative and positive space assuming the role of two lines. In other words, the drawing has to be made in such a way that one side of the line encloses a smooth, soft form, and the other side encloses an aggressive one.

As in reality, both sides of the line define a different and opposite form. It is obvious that there is not one line - indeed it's always two.

Thiopia
102" x 60" (irregular) 259 x 152 cm.
1976. Oil on canvas
Metropolitan Art Museum, Miami



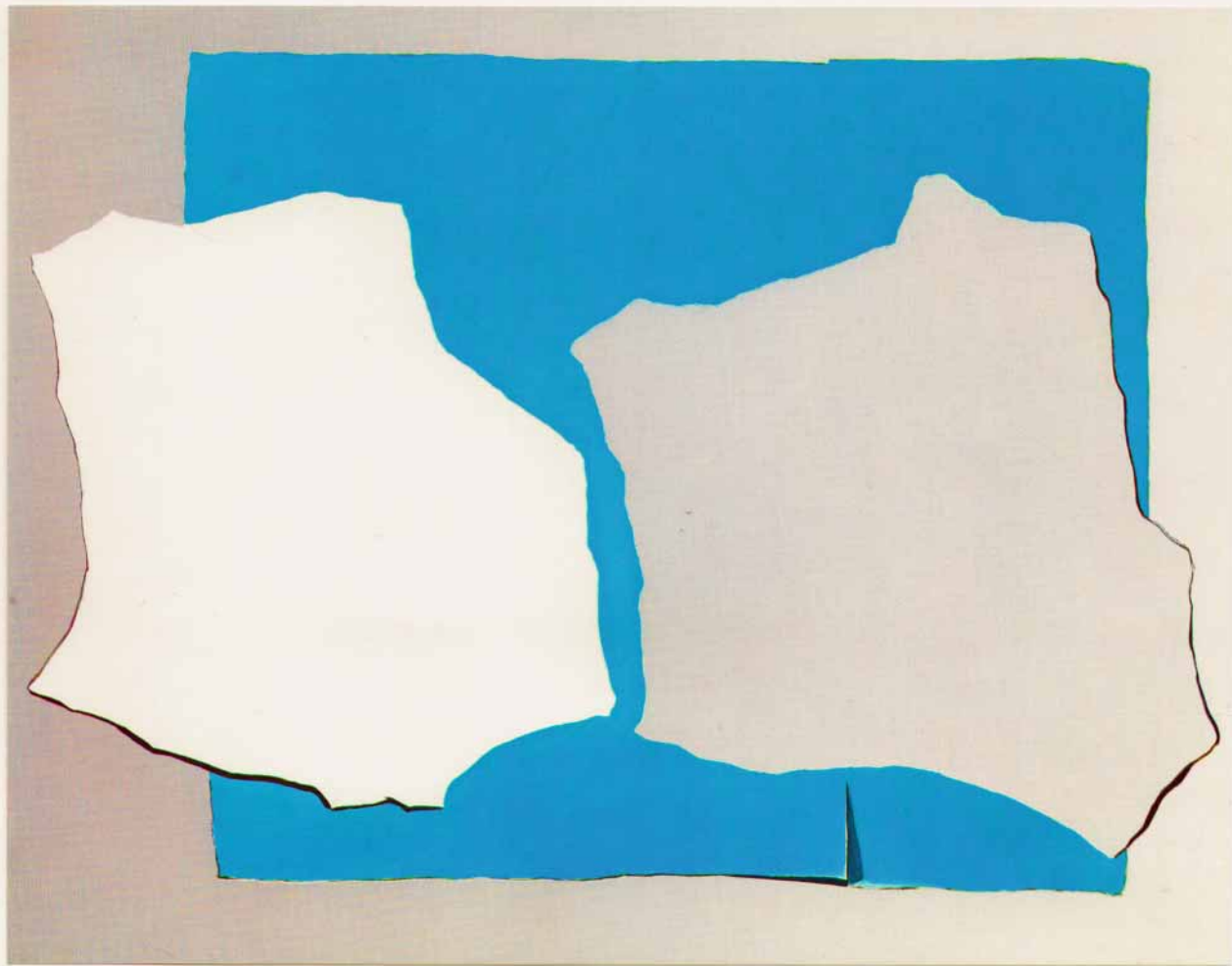
In dealing with art we always propose the absolute.

But if in this attempt some lateral aspects become clarified, we should gratefully take hold of them.

Just as the whole appears to us only in fragments, so too does the truth in partial truths.

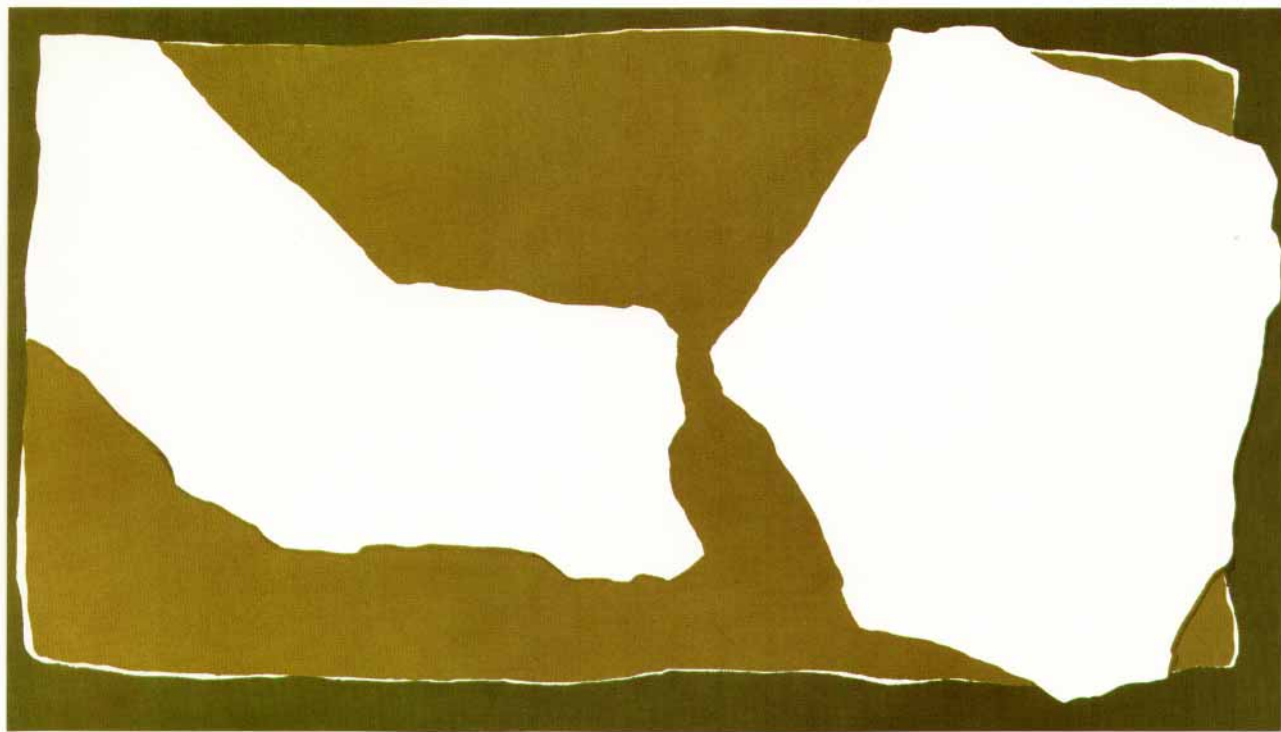
An object which gives up its particular significance and lends its form for a superior purpose is an anti-object.

Almos
74 1/2" x 95 1/2" 189 x 243 cm.
1975. Oil on canvas



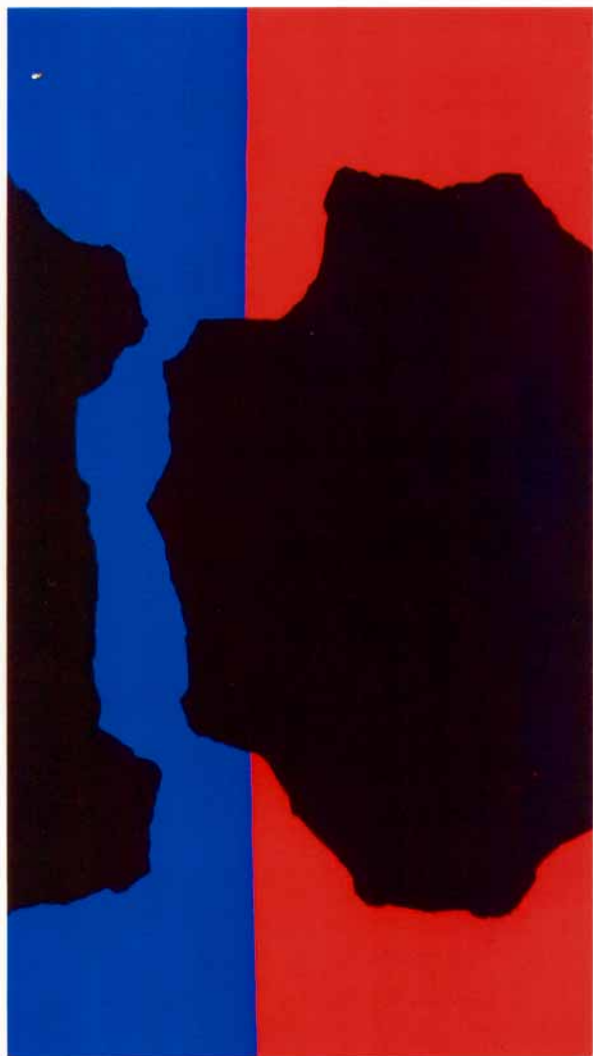
It is not the point whether a painting is composed or not composed, because it can be composed perfectly and still — in spite of all its beauty, colors, lines, shapes and textures — be meaningless to us if the inner form-relationship does not work.

Kont
27" x 48" 69 x 122 cm
1975. Oil on canvas.



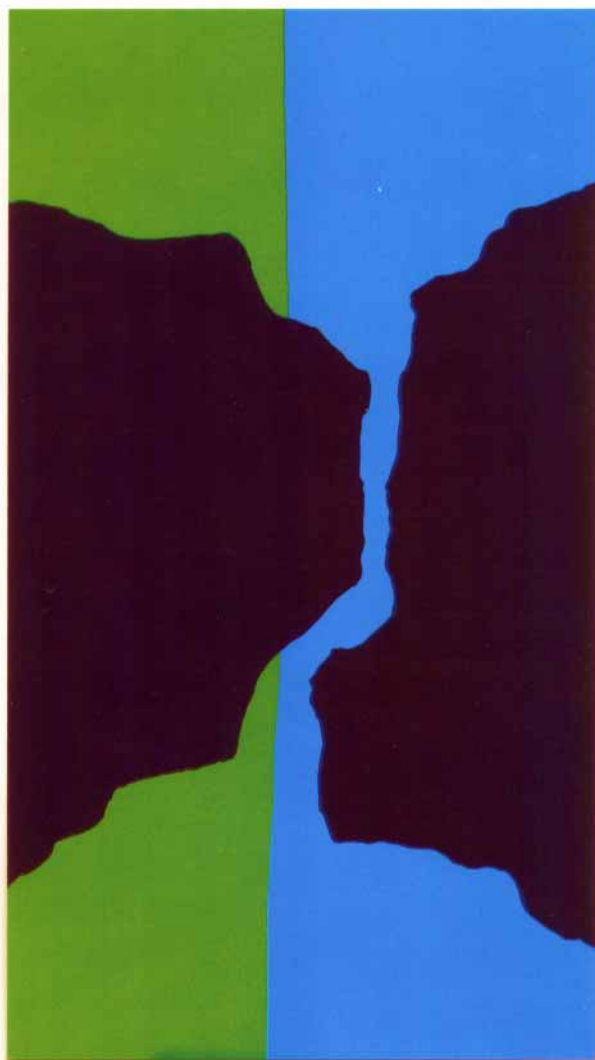
A fragment is no less enigmatic than the whole... it is enigmatic, but simultaneously familiar to us... because we remember it and in part we anticipate it... it forms part of us, as we are part of it.

Forms in Tension (red)
35" x 22½" 89 x 57 cm.
1975. Serigraph, portfolio of four



I strongly believe that if you have no purpose other than art and achieve an interrelation of abstract forms, which has esthetic validity, then this truth must have usefulness in other activities of the human mind, as for example in the sciences.

As Lynn Arthur Steen, a mathematician at St. Olaf College, Minn., said: "... if a particular problem can be transformed into a picture, then the mind grasps the problem as a whole and can think creatively about solutions."

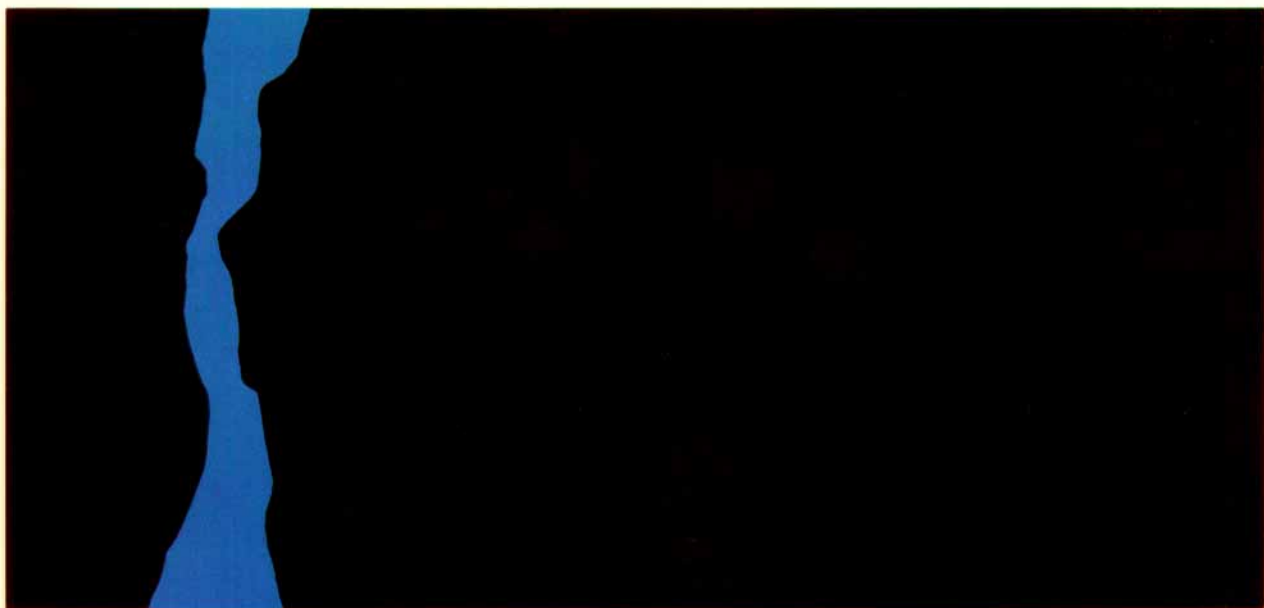


For me art is an ontological occupation.

In the work of art the subject matter can be social, political, psychological or religious. But it is only artistically revealing if it confronts and focuses on the *Seinsproblem*.

The statement of it has to be true.

The truthfulness gives the value and transcendence of the work itself. Only in this way can it be relevant to us.



My painting is concerned with the relation between forms. The tensions are brought about by two acting lines - which encircle, cross or delimit space. Through the activity of these lines, the delimited or created space becomes also an acting entity, giving to the Nothing a meaning, as Heidegger does.

Botond No. 2 (yellow)
77 1/2" x 144 1/2" 197 x 367 cm
1976. Oil on canvas



The tracing of an abstract line is direct handwriting.
It carries no other message than the one it itself expresses.

Botond No. 4 (grey) in progress
47 1/2" x 91" 121 x 231 cm
1977 Acrylic and oil on canvas

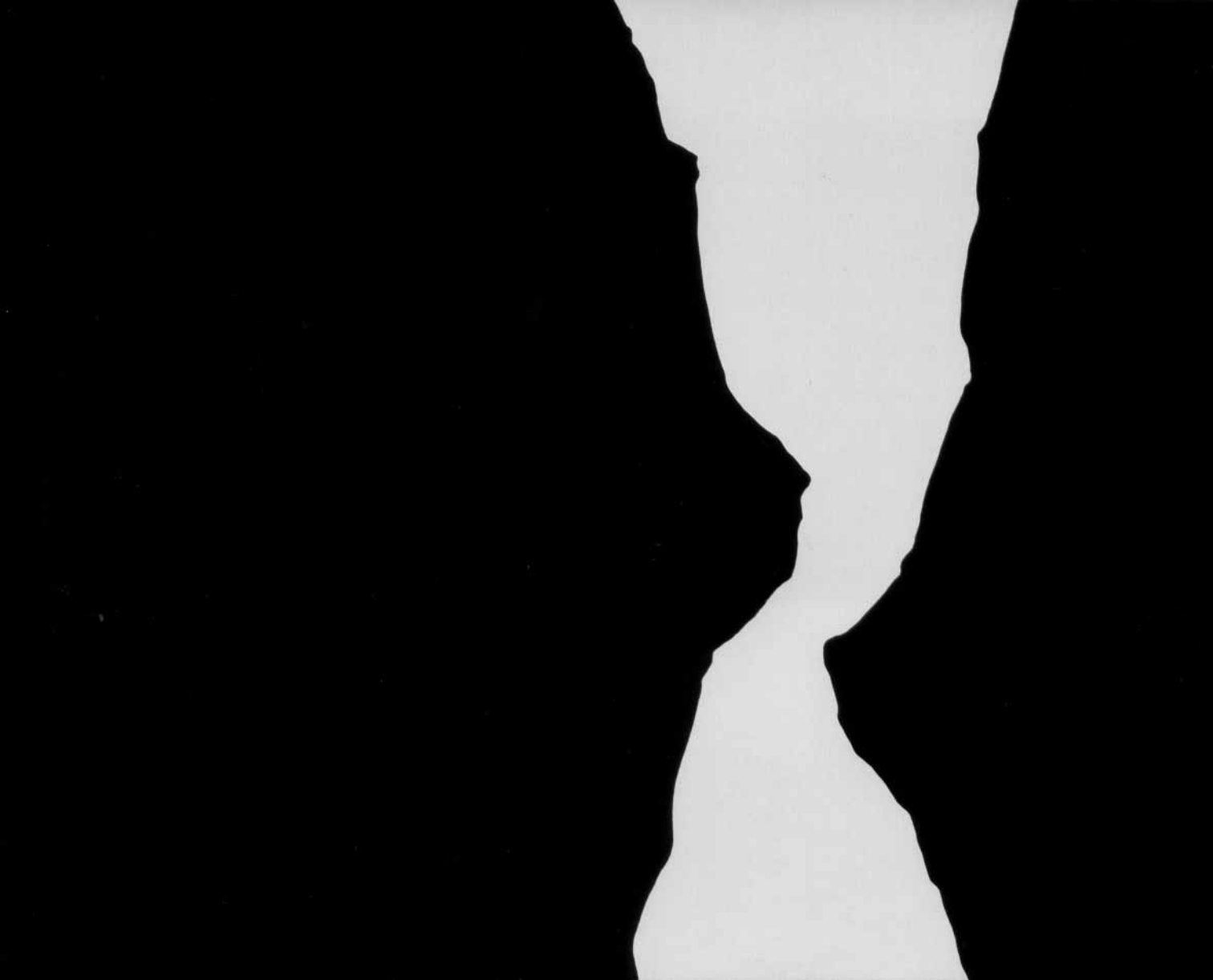


If a point, as for Leibnitz, contains the projection of a line, so much more does the line of a painter contain the essence of his whole artistic experience.

Botond No. 6 (cielo)
60" x 146½" 152 x 372 cm.
1977. Acrylic on canvas



real AS is relevant,
but inexplicable



NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

Boston, Massachusetts
January 12 - February 18, 1978

NORTON GALLERY & SCHOOL OF ART

West Palm Beach, Florida
Summer 1978



Rafael Squirru with Batuz in
garden of Greens Farms studio

The Artist And His Milieu

by Rafael Squirru

The relationship between an artist and his milieu is a very mysterious aspect of the creative process.

Why should Gauguin have to travel as far as the South Sea islands to give us the best and most forceful statements of his plastic genius, or how can we explain that no painter ever reached the spanishness of El Greco, the greek that his very name proclaims.

I believe a valid point regarding the art of Batuz is to dwell on that aspect of his aesthetic development.

I knew Batuz since the days he struggled in Villa Gesell, a summer resort south of Buenos Aires and shared with him the restlessness of his dreams which drove him to design his cave like studio, to model strange and somewhat terrifying sculptures, to attack hardboard spaces with synthetic colours that tried in some way to release his indomitable energy.

Yet, there appeared to me that there was something lacking.

It was difficult to say what it was, to pin it down.

Batuz appeared to me to be like a giant trapped in a net.

When one day he told me of his resolve to try his lot as an artist by emigrating with his family to the United States, I felt a sense of relief.

I myself had lived seven years up there and could say with the great cuban poet Jose Marti: "I lived inside the monster and am acquainted with its entrails". A symbol I should imagine taken from Jonah and the whale.

I considered no mean feat to have undergone that experience and not only to have survived spiritually and physically but also to have enriched myself with highly important and vital values, I knew not of...

North America in this sense, doesn't leave room for too many nuances. You either survive and learn to incorporate its values or down you go, never to rise again. In the States, people really die (as well as live), not like down south where as some profound observer said: Nobody dies.

That is probably why Americans don't like to speak about death; it is something very real to them. Death, oblivion, defeat, as the Americans would put it: "He's had it", means one really has had it. I suppose this is the other side of the American dream, and one that holds true for a good many that don't accomplish the dream. Still there is no denying that there are some who do.

And I had the strong presentment that precisely Batuz belonged, because of his titanic energy to the category of the chosen few. His ambition of space, the breadth of his gesticulations, the very shoes he wore, spoke of a destiny that could only be accomplished in the land of the skyscrapers.

Size is important in the States. Buildings are tall, the people are tall or broad, or both, paintings are huge, space is vitally important. Latin artists tend to enclose space, they tend to be intimate, they whisper their confessions.

The space of American artists invades their canvases and their forms invade that space, as was well pointed out by Roy Slade, an intelligent observer of the artistic phenomenon.

The Americans discovered that more red is a different red in terms of the space it covers.

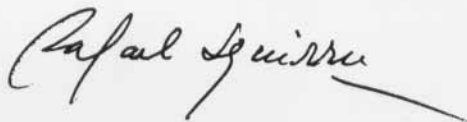
Just as I had imagined the art of Batuz, finally found its true dimension.

His forms became more defined. His assertive personality found the kind of echo for which it was meant.

Labyrinths may be fine in the culture of Borges and because of their fineness they may be appreciated by the American mind, but they could never translate the type of intensity that belongs to Henry Miller or Faulkner or Muhammad Ali. Hungarian born Batuz no doubt learned a few things in his long stay in Argentina, but his definite encounter with himself has taken place beside the Motherwells, the Downings, the Gilliams, the Nolands where he really belongs.

It is good news that a new artist has appeared in the midst of the American scene.

This is no case of transplantation. It is one more case of the type of marriage that took place with Gauguin or Greco and the respective lands of their choice. It is only pertinent that art criticism should celebrate this happiest of all encounters.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rafael Squirru". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Rafael Squirru

Buenos Aires, 1976



On The Art Of Batuz

by Frank Getlein

There are half a dozen North American painters to whose work the work of Batuz, Hungarian turned Argentine turned, finally, North American himself, relates at one remove or another. Yet that relationship only serves as a kind of artistic visa, bearing out the affinities perceived by Rafael Squirru elsewhere in these pages. The more important relationship for the work of Batuz is not so much to the artist's new countrymen as to the modern pioneers of his original continent, the beginnings of 20th century art in Paris.

In those distant days, now comprising a Golden Age, although certainly not seen as such by the people living then, Picasso and Braque began experimenting with collage and with the use of objects assembled and painted.

Braque transmuted certain paper effects of his family of decorators into his art; Picasso translated his assemblages of objects into the permanent artistic material of cast bronze.

Decades later, the third of those early giants, Matisse, limited by age and sickness, ended his long and brilliant career sitting up in bed and cutting out colored papers.

In his own ways and for his own purposes, Batuz also has used the effects of cut out, or torn, colored papers, and, like Picasso, has transmuted this transitory medium into one of permanence, oil on canvas.

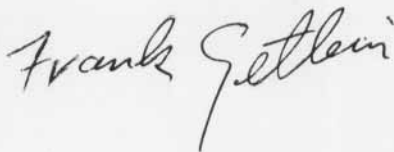
Batuz does not actually "paint" with papers; he paints with paint; but the effect, especially when seen in page-size reproduction, as in this publication, often suggests shapes arrived at by tearing papers, laying them on top of one another, moving them about until a sort of occult, non-geometric, non-measurable "balance" is struck.

Invariably, the paintings of Batuz do strike such a balance, convince the viewer that a shade to the left or right and the picture wouldn't work, a change in the color relationships, not necessarily in the colors themselves, might be fatal.

What has been sought and achieved is a formal perfection all the more admirable because it is never reducible to rational, geometric analysis.

Like the music of Bach, the paintings of Mondrian, for instance, can be analyzed quantitatively as a key to the sources of their quality.

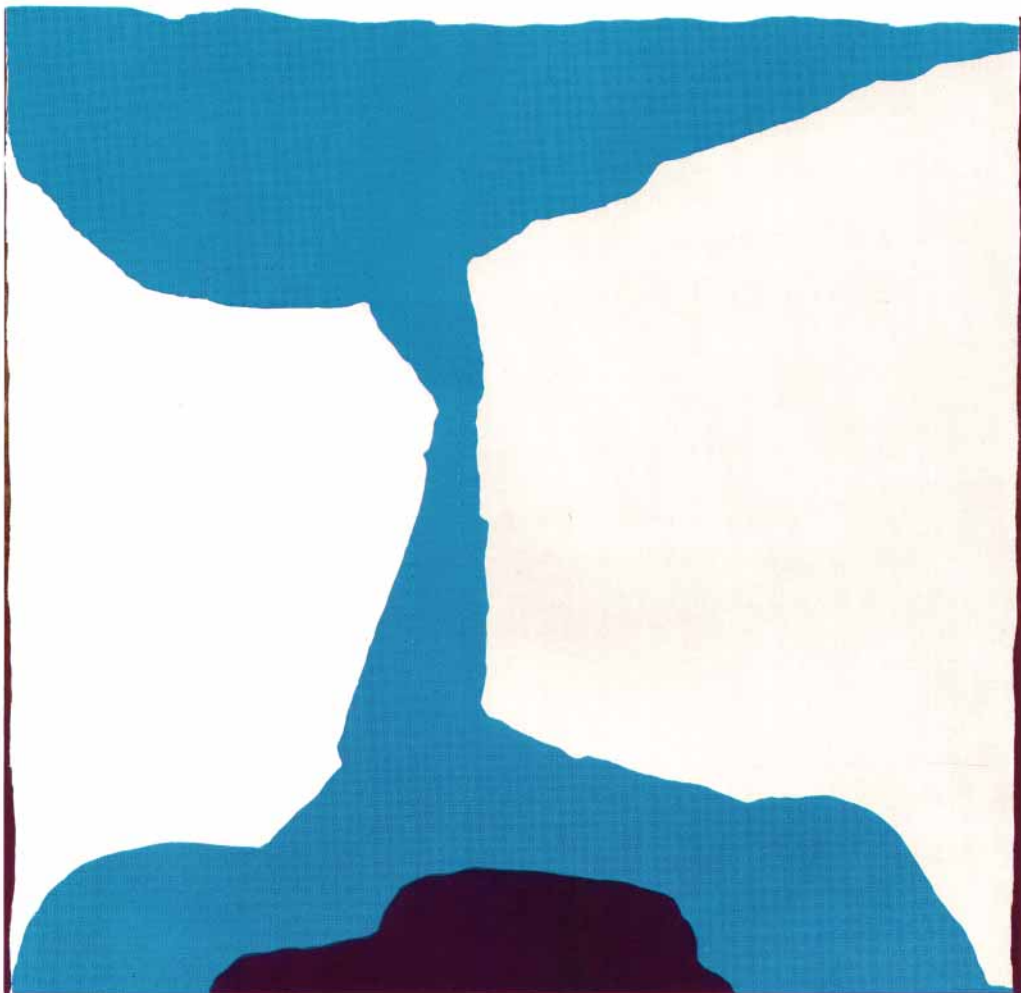
The paintings of Batuz defy such analysis, yet always arrive at the same kind of inevitability.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Frank Getlein". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" and last name "Getlein" clearly legible.

Frank Getlein

Washington D.C., 1977

Abs No. 1
48" x 50" 122 x 127 cm.
1975. Oil on canvas





Greens Farms studio

Batuz's Formenwelt

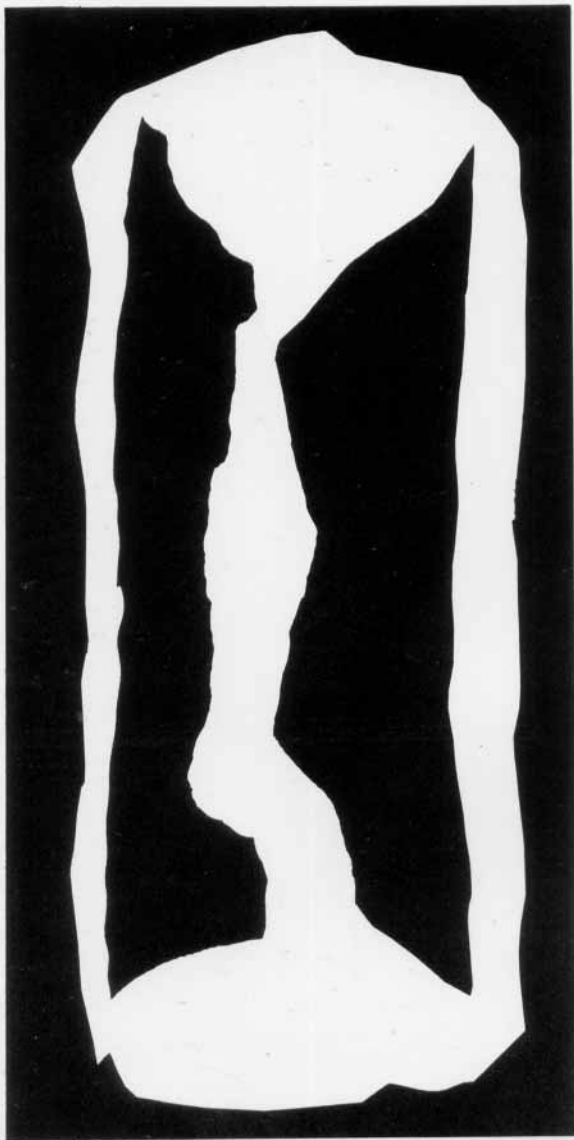
by Dr. Dieter Ronte

In a democratic society, social benefits for the individual are taken for granted. This is certainly true for Europe and its social thought, which has manifested itself in various systems. This integration into a structure enhances an individual's attachments, but it also renders more difficult his autonomy. It levels out the extraordinary.

This problem has been discussed again and again since Ibsen's Nora. Yet it is foreign even today to people who think traditionally.

In the Bergmann film "Scenes from a Marriage," which illuminates the confusions of our society in the private sphere, the heroine says in an inventory of her life: "If one wants to purchase outward security, that demands a high price: namely that one accepts the ongoing disturbance of the personality." She discerns loss of identity no longer in poverty and sickness but rather in conventions and compromises, which can hinder individual development and the chances for fulfillment and experience of self.

Our century has freed itself more and more from nature and has created a cultural environment with its own conventions, as some sociologists see it. We are prepared today to demand more self-



development and self-determination, more sensual satisfaction, more joy.

It is particularly in the sphere of art that the possibilities par excellence for such demands are located. From here, society can expect new impulses; be they general or particular, they will surely be exemplary.

Many observers of today's art scene miss a clear, predominant trend in art, miss the generally accepted style, which can then be discarded as worn out like an old wreck, only — at best — to be mourned.

I believe that we live in an epoch which will someday be judged as favorable for art, because the scene has again become open.

Our society today chases no short-lived ideals, it rather inquires to itself, tries to give an account of its environment, its resources, its possibilities and outlooks.

That does not necessarily mean that we live in particularly brilliant or happy years. But it does mean that we are again prepared to take seriously, without imposing any constraints, the individual expressions of our fellow man, to accept and perhaps also to understand them.

Our century has produced an art which largely shuns classical historical development in the sense

of progress. The artists' impulses for artistic expression and their strivings for individual articulation have produced multifarious simultaneity of mutually exclusive possibilities.

In our century, Kandinsky took the decisive step toward the abstract image, the step from the reproductive to the evocative image.

As its logical opposite, the object has since Duchamp been often discussed.

Despite the wide differences in their art in individual, national, and international contexts, the great artists have one thing in common: they do not avoid risk, they seek adventure, they break conventions, they are guarantors of innovations, their art is disturbing.

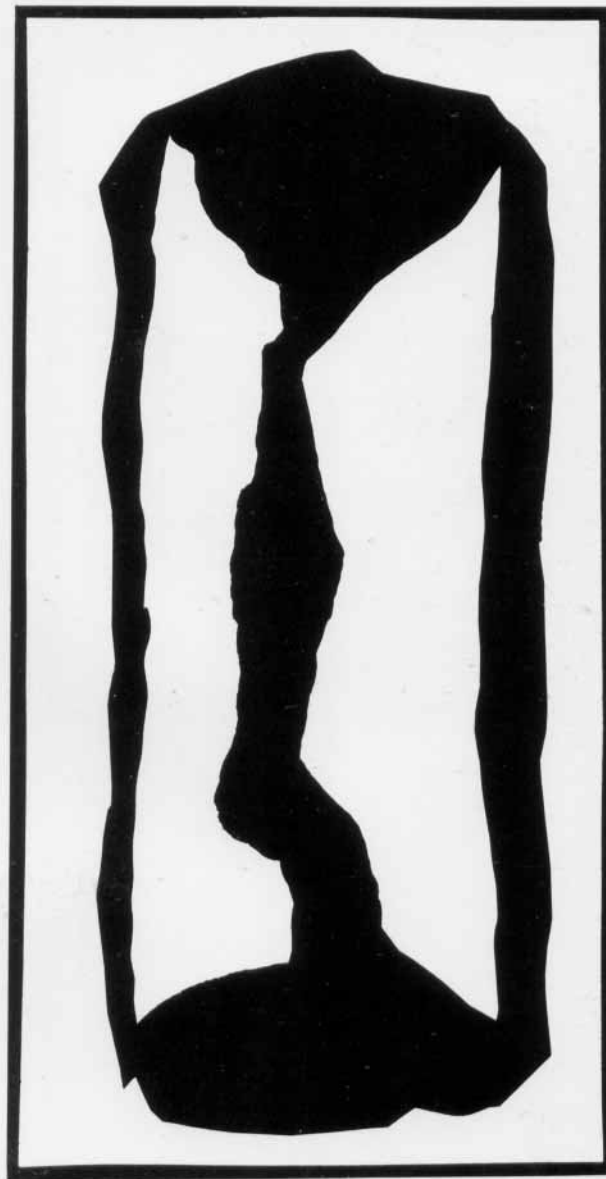
They obstruct art's total administration, for they themselves administer creativity.

They thus create a free space which we non-artists are dependent upon if we do not wish to perish in a well-designed but boring world.

II

I believe that these remarks have a great deal to do with Batuz and his art.

Batuz is an example of an exemplary search for self-realization.



Batuz has never shunned conflict or confrontation with conventions, nor reflections on his own roots. Batuz is the international wanderer, the philosopher, the self-educated painter of professional quality. (Precisely the self-educated artists, who are tied to no academic tradition, have decisively influenced the art of our century.)

Batuz is the searcher who transforms new experience immediately into art.

Batuz is dissatisfied with the pre-formed world (and he is familiar with the most varied continents). But Batuz is also the active one, the positively forming one. Batuz builds for himself his own house, unconventionally, differently from "real architecture."

Batuz seeks his own specific environment; he seeks a new symbiosis with the world. For Batuz does not subjugate himself to the world. He attempts to change it, to better it; Batuz seeks joy.

There is in Batuz something dreamlike-utopian, something which we need, which we require all the more, the more we are imprisoned in social structures.

Batuz seeks, finds and offers joy, the fantastic experience of the new and the creative.

Batuz expresses himself in paintings, in sculptures, in graphics.

Batuz is not introverted.

Batuz is communicative.

Batuz understands his art as existential proof of his life and his thoughts.

Batuz thinks unrestrainedly.

Batuz stands with his art in a long tradition.

Batuz understands art not as pure decoration.

Batuz is an adventure for Batuz and for us.

Batuz' art is a deep, sensual experience.

It is well to accept Batuz' challenge, for Batuz illuminates our world by poeticizing it.



Animation
30 1/2" x 25 1/4" 77 x 65 cm.
1976. Serigraph

III

A decisive step for Batuz' art was the artist's settling in the USA. Batuz found the adequate path for himself. He found his own handwriting, which he will develop further. The North American works of Batuz are free, generous, big, monumental. They testify to a free spirit, to fantasy and conviction. It is Paul Klee who says: "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather it makes visible." He writes that in the "Creative Confessions" of 1920.

Batuz also makes visible; his pictures are visual confessions.

I first meet Batuz and his art a year ago. I am taken aback. It is an experience. I am besieged by memories; I think immediately of Paul Klee, of making visible. I think of Willi Baumeister and the "unknown in art." I reflect on color-field-painting; I compare American and European painting. I understand very quickly that Batuz is a European who is in love with America, no, who needs the States. Yet I also notice a high quality in the art, a quality which immediately pushes aside the question of nationality. But how can this intensity be combined with such great yet simple matter-of-factness, this precision with this poetry?

Nevertheless, the new pictures of Batuz are superb examples of American art.

Batuz developed his language from a description of the world of things towards the free, abstract forms which express an essential feeling for life, which reflect the new experience of America. In his own words: "It became clearer and clearer to me that America is not only a country or a nation, like so many others, but an animistic state, a feeling. Not just a big country, but another dimension — the dimension of freedom, in all the beautiful and tragic sense of this tremendous word."

Batuz captures the new dimensions and forms of life in small as well as in large formats. His world

of forms consists of autonomous formulations, of strokes, surfaces, contours, and colors, of positive and negative elements. Single strokes are precisely done. Guidance of the strokes is trained by the object.

Today, it is no longer required of the object that it articulates itself.

The lines and surfaces express the personal topography, the landscape of the artist's life, his experiences, his defeats, his successes, his sadness, his joy.

They do not stand for a single action.

We learn nothing of an actual event.

Batuz tells no story, for he loves the truth.

We see the sum total, the result, the philosophical abstraction.

The lines activate each other, they thrust themselves forward and backward, they enclose.

They reflect human life.

IV

This new portfolio of Batuz unites the experiences of recent years. Batuz has conclusively abandoned all vestiges of his realistic period. He concentrates totally on the particular form.

Silk-screening as a graphic technique demands extreme exactitude; it prevents the purely accidental outcome; it controls the artistic process far more than sketching or painting.

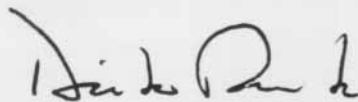
Klee writes on the subject: "The essence of graphics seduces easily and justifiably toward abstraction. A schematic and fairy-tale quality of the imaginary character is already present and yet at the same time manifests itself with great precision. The purer the graphic work, that is, the more emphasis placed on those elements of form which underlie graphic depiction, then the faultier the

equipment for realistic depiction of visible things becomes . . . Elements of form of graphic art are: points — linear, surface, and spatial energies."

Batuz is an excellent graphic artist.

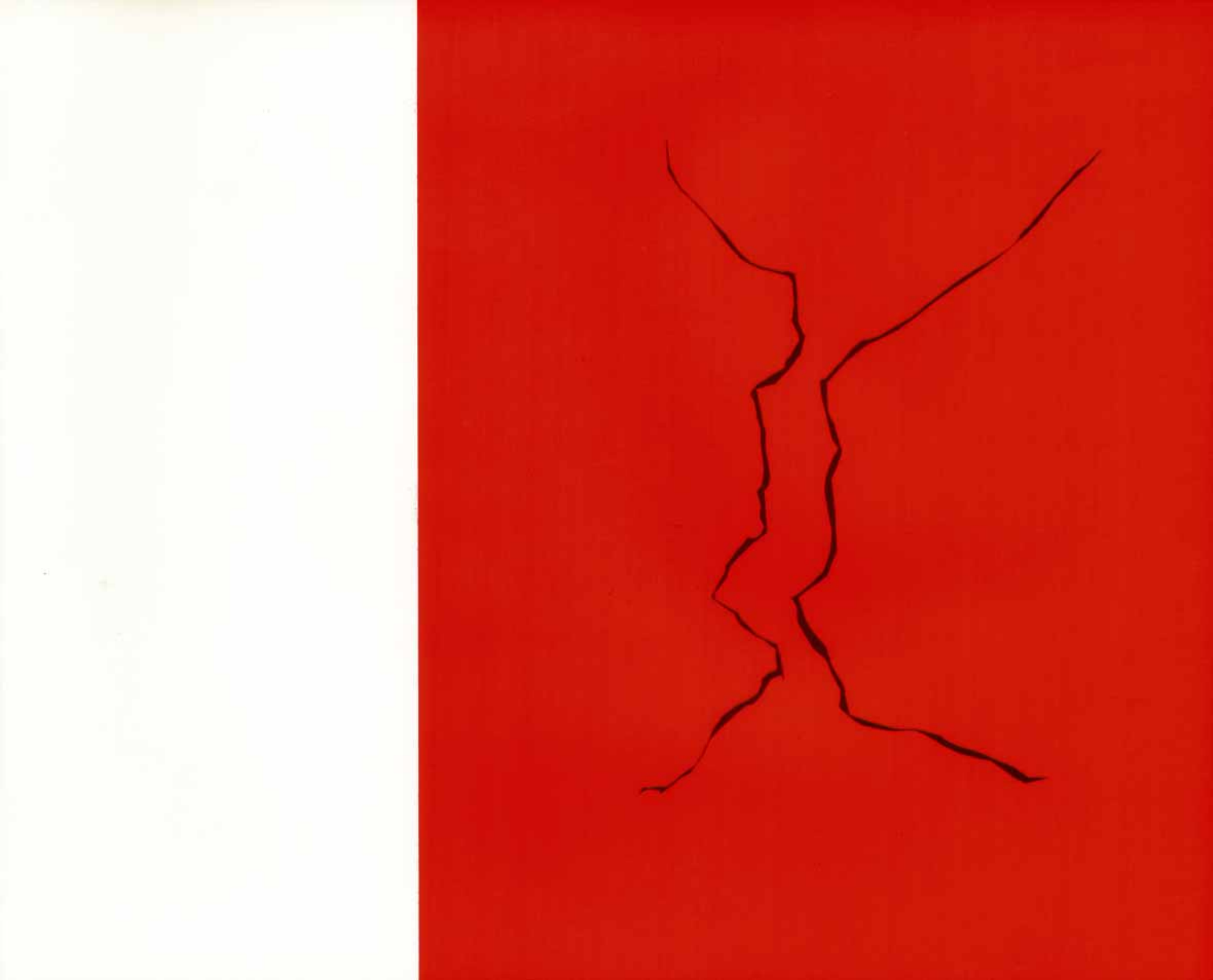
The individual pages emit a great calm, an organic calm, in which movement is anchored. The reciprocal effect of the colors, the dominance of one color over others, the play of single lines, the shaping of forms result in free elements which group together and dismember themselves or mutually rebuild themselves, which isolate themselves only to build again a Whole of great range and free breath.

Batuz employs his graphic language in a parabolic manner; Batuz creates in exemplary fashion a new cosmos parallel to nature, a cosmos which has now become a dialogic component of our world and our knowledge, which is a corner-stone of a better order and is instruction for greater freedom and inner mobility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dieter Ronte', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr. Dieter Ronte

Cologne, 1977



A Commentary

by Joseph H. Hirshhorn

We almost didn't meet. ...

Selden Rodman gave me his telephone number the summer of 1975. It was so hot, I was so busy — too busy to call. Ute called. She called and she called and she called.

Finally, I said I would see them — only to get it over with as I had decided not to make more art purchases.

What started as a chore turned into a delightful encounter.

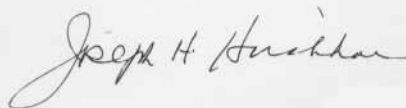
I was impressed with his paintings. He had a unique style, true to his form. I liked how he handled his paints and the interplay between the colors, shapes and spaces was intriguing.



I stayed much longer than I had expected.
There was so much to see.

He executes his own silk screens with the help of his children, Ute makes the folders for his portfolios. Prints were drying all over the place.

I have become fond of Batuz, a good friend and artist. Though new to the New York area I predict a bright future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Joseph H. Hirshhorn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.

Joseph H. Hirshhorn

Greenwich, Conn., 1977



Batuz with Joseph and Olga Hirshhorn

Public Collections

Musée des Beaux Arts, Zurich, Switzerland
The Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum u. Museum Ludwig,
Cologne, West Germany
Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil
Museu de Arte Moderno, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela
Kunsthalle, Nuremberg, West Germany
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Madrid, Spain
Museo de Arte Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina
The Metropolitan Museum, Miami, Florida, U.S.A.
Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Montevideo, Uruguay
The Litchfield Historic Museum, Connecticut, U.S.A.
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich, Connecticut, U.S.A.
Museum of Art, Science & Industry & Planetarium,
Bridgeport, Connecticut, U.S.A.
The New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, Canada
Museo de Bellas Artes, Santiago de Chile
Argentine Embassy, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
Argentine Embassy, Bonn, West Germany
Permanent Collection Pan American Union,
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
Mobil Oil Corp., U.S.A.
Siemens AG, Munich, West Germany
Conahotu, Venezuela
Hoechst Chemicals, Argentina
I.B.M. Corp., U.S.A.
Kaiser Industries, Argentina
Interamerican Development Bank,
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
Putnam Trust, Greenwich, Connecticut, U.S.A.
Business Equipment Inc., New York, U.S.A.
Equal Employment Opportunity Services,
New York, U.S.A.
Citibank, New York, U.S.A.

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Mother



Grandfather



Father



Batuz



Biography

1933 Batuz was born on May 27, 1933, in Budapest, Hungary.
 He spent his childhood at the country estate of Matraderecske that belonged to the family for generations.
 The estate was administrated patriarchally and with total authority.
 He was educated and raised to be the only heir to this estate.



- 1944 Batuz' life changed abruptly when the front lines of World War II approached the area. The family looked for temporary refuge from the horrors of the war and moved westwards, never to return.

The loss of the security of a privileged environment affected his later life and work.

- 1945 There was wandering, starvation and refugee camps.

The contact with people under these circumstances gave him another dimension of life.



- 1946 He worked hard to help to maintain the family. Batuz studied in spare hours and passed his examinations with honors.



- 1949 The family emigrated to Argentina. During a heart ailment that incapacitated him for a year, Batuz started to paint in a naturalistic style.
- 1950 Batuz was completely self-taught in art; he also pursued studies in esthetics and philosophy. He shared wide humanistic interests with a group of friends: Edgar Hell, Zoltan Szankay and J. Juszko. His painting style became more personal.
- 1957 The encounter with other painters (Fernhomberg, Capot, Pepe and Ponomarenko) showed him the bohemian side of life. They undertook many excursions to paint in the country.
- 1961 Married Ute Mattel, granddaughter of the Austrian composer Anton von Webern.
- 1963 First one-man show in Buenos Aires in the Galeria Lerner. Birth of his first son, Sasa.
- 1964 Abandoned business and dedicated himself exclusively to painting. One-man show at the Asociacion Estimulo Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires.



Ute



Villa Gesell



- Moved to Villa Gesell, a solitary place by the sea, where he spent eight years in complete dedication to his work.
The bright and hard sunshine on this vast extension of sea and sand dunes influenced his forms and colors.
He turned more and more towards abstraction.
- 1965 One-man shows in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata.
Birth of second son, Bandy.
- 1966 Shows at Circulo and Van Riel galleries in Buenos Aires.
- 1967 Made a series of sculptures with lava rocks. The interrelationships of sculptural positive and negative space, and the tension created between the two, has had a fundamental influence on his work.
Exhibition in Mar del Plata.
Birth of little girl, Dada.

- 1969 Built his atelier, approaching it like an organic sculpture without previous plans.
He completed the entire construction himself.
Became an exclusive artist of Wildenstein Galleries.
Met Rafael Squirru, beginning of a great friendship.
- 1971 Founded the Artist Center in Villa Gesell to bring together painters, writers, sculptors and musicians.
The Center was planned with a museum-gallery, working studios and lodgings for invited artists.
Batuz obtained a donation of the building-site for this purpose.
- 1972 Published his first portfolio of serigraphs.
The flat-even surface of silkscreen printing was a revelation to Batuz.
Simplification in his work followed.
John and Francesca Davis Lodge, at this time the American Ambassador to Argentina, became interested in Batuz' work. There was the beginning of a valued friendship.
With the sponsorship of the Argentine Government, Batuz left for an exhibition tour of Europe and the United States.





Greens Farms



- 1973 Change of government in Argentina.
 Batuz lost his sponsorship and was stranded in New York with all his oeuvres.
 He moved into a loft on Canal Street.
 No knowledge of English, no friends.
 Thomas Messer advised him not to do a show in New York immediately, but to remain in the country and work.
 Batuz became severely ill and suffered complete breakdown for several months.
 Desperate economic situation.
 Sasa contracted scurvy.
 Bill and Susie Crofut's care was a source of strength and comfort.
 Nevertheless he managed to organize a studio in Westport, Connecticut and took up work again.
 One-man show at the Organization of American States in Washington, D.C.
 Several galleries in New York City handled his work.

- 1974 Batuz was invited to lecture by The Arts Students League of New York City.
 Several one-man shows in museums and universities in the United States.
 Met G. Todd Jagerson who helped him establish a silkscreen workshop. Todd's interest and support played a central role at this crucial time in Batuz' life.
 His paintings, reflecting these vital experiences, turned more and more toward the source and origin of forms.
- 1975 Published his portfolio "Forms in Tension", Met Selden Rodman.
 Mass Communications International published an audio-visual program on Batuz' life and work: "The Creative Artist".
 Joseph and Olga Hirshhorn visited his studio on several occasions.
 Their interest in Batuz' work along their personal friendship was of great encouragement.



Greens Farms



There was a three months trip through several South American countries, and Batuz was especially attracted to Brazil.

In Argentina he had two memorable dialogues with Jorge Luis Borges where they considered the function of "Form" in painting and literature.

- 1976 International Fine Arts Ltd. became the exclusive dealer for his graphic work. Batuz accepted an invitation to exhibit in West Germany. Used the occasion to visit friends, some not seen for 30 years.



Visited Oskar Kokoshka at his home in Villeneuve.

Met Carlos Arean, Director of the Contemporary Museum of Madrid.

H.H. Arnason visited Batuz in his studio in Greens Farms, Connecticut.

Published his portfolio "Homage to America". Founded the International Cultural Program to aid Latin-American artists arriving in the United States.

- 1977 Two months trip to Argentina and other South American countries. Introduced other mediums into his work, as collages with pasted paper and canvas on wood. Published portfolio "Polymorphic". Henry Geldzahler's visit to Batuz' studio was very stimulating. He urged him to work. Several large scale paintings followed. His works were shown at the new acquisition shows at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. and at the Kunsthal, Nuremberg, West Germany.

each passing
reflects part of
our lives.

... The form
becomes the
content of it.

Translations

Texts by R. Squirru, F. Getlein and Dr. D. Ronte translated into
the Portuguese by Jorge Schwartz, Universidade de São Paulo

Text by P.M. Bardi translated from the Portuguese by
Suzanne J. Levine, Yale University

Text by Dr. D. Ronte translated from the German by
Michael T. Jones, Yale University

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