

GEORGE NAMA
FLEETING IMAGES: A SURVEY
1958-2008

SUMMER EXHIBITION
June 4th through July 26th, 2013

Exhibition organized by
Robert Kashey and David Wojciechowski

SHEPHERD
W & K
GALLERIES

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FLEETING IMAGES: A SURVEY
1958 -2008

Shepherd Gallery has undertaken a survey of works by George Nama from his earliest portrait drawings to his current figures and abstractions.

Part one of the survey takes us from the early drawings and casein paintings, depicting his intimate surroundings in Pittsburg, artist’s models and friends, to observations of the city itself. His birthplace was Homestead, across the river from Pittsburg, which in the early 1950s witnessed an intensely creative moment with a vibrant Jazz scene and the Carnegie International exhibitions. Nama was a keen recorder of this stimulating environment as one can see in his evocative cityscapes.

In the 1960s Nama worked at William Stanley Hayter’s 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, on artist’s books. This in turn fostered a series of artist’s books and exhibitions with Alfred Brendel and Charles Simic. Many of these projects were exhibited at Shepherd Gallery and subsequently embraced by our fellow gallerists in Europe and America.

During his long career, Nama has been represented in numerous important exhibitions, galleries, and public collections, such as The Morgan Library, the Boston Athenæum, The Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Museum and the Carnegie Institute. He was recently included in the distinguished international art fairs at Maastricht and the Salon du Dessin in Paris.

The title *Fleeting Images* reflects George Nama’s take on reality: observing an object means to him perceiving changing images. Throughout his work he is concerned with the metamorphosis of a given subject – a body, a room, a city, a tree or a landscape. The present survey exemplifies that for Nama, natural elements and abstraction are at one.

Since Nama continually revisits his themes throughout his career, the catalog does not follow a strictly chronological sequence. Rather, the works are grouped to show the progression and integration of natural elements and abstraction. Personal observations from his journal are quoted throughout the catalog.

Robert Kashey
David Wojciechowski
June 2013

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Keith Stout

PHOTOGRAPHY: Hisao Oka

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Christine Romero, Jodi Roberts, Monica Steinberg, Elisabeth Kashey.

REMARKS

“Poetry is between language and presence. It rushes forward towards presence, but it is only great if it remembers that it always will be in lack, because it remains language. George Nama’s art is emblematic of the essential contradiction, of the ambiguity, of the pain, inherent in poetry.”

Yves Bonnefoy
*Nama and Bonnefoy have collaborated on
artist’s books for over forty years.*

“I encountered George Nama’s work first in 1996, in Vevey, Switzerland, at the exhibition honoring the great poet Yves Bonnefoy, 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 the sculp- tural work.”

Alfred Brendel
*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. Indeed, Brendel
and Nama collaborated for over ten years on a series of artist’s books and exhibitions.*
RK / DW

“The strange and illuminating power of variations on the same subject, the care he takes with each nuance of color and each sharply-rendered or blurred detail, is what draws us to these works. He is like a symbolist poet. He thrives both on ambiguity and clarity, managing at the same time to both reveal and withhold his intentions, so that one goes back to his images as one goes back to poems that our emotions and our intellect do not seem to be able to exhaust. However he sets his traps for our eyes and our minds, Nama does it with the assurance of a master, an artist who has already made many beautiful and memorable works of art over the years.”

Charles Simic
*George Nama and Charles Simic, the poet laureate of 2007,
have collaborated on artist’s books during the past ten years.*

CATALOG

- (1)

Polish Lady. 1959. Pencil on paper, 10 3/4" x 8". Signed and dated
- (2)

Polish Lady. 1959. Pencil on paper, 10 3/4" x 8". Signed and dated
- (3)

Untitled. 1958. Pencil on paper, 14" x 11 1/2". Signed and dated
- (4)

Untitled. 1960. Etching, 8" x 6". Edition: 18/18. Signed and dated
- (5)

Jerry Massabro, Bassist. 1959. Pencil on paper, 43" x 31". Signed and dated
- (6)

Grandmother’s Kitchen, Homestead. 1962. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 30" x 43". Signed and dated
- (7)

Mother’s Dining Room. 1961. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 36" x 43". Signed and dated
- (8)

Interior—Mother’s House. 1963. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 36" x 47". Signed and dated
- (9)

Looking up Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh. 1961. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 39" x 47". Signed and dated
- (10)

Backyards, Homestead. 1961. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 35" x 42". Signed and dated
- (11)

Rooftops Looking Toward Pittsburgh. 1961. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 35" x 47". Signed and dated
- (12)

Snowscape, Oakland. 1960. Casein, charcoal, and pastel on paper, 35" x 43". Signed and dated
- (13)

Interior no. 2—Mother’s House. 1963. Stone lithograph, 13" x 19 1/2". Edition of 11. Signed and dated
- (14)

Interior no. 1—Mother’s Dining Room. 1963. Stone lithograph, 13" x 18". Edition of 13. Signed and dated
- (15-18)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink and wash on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (19-21)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, charcoal, and casein white on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (22)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (23-24)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, charcoal, and casein white on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (25)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, sepia and casein on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (26)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, casein white, and pastel on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (27)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, and watercolor on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (28)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, and sepia on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (29)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (30)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink and wash on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (31)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, charcoal, and casein white on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (32)

Untitled (from Pittsburgh/Homestead/Oakland sketchbook). 1959-60. Ink, wash, and charcoal on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed and dated on verso
- (33)

Landscape. 1959-60. Ink and wash on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed on verso
- (34)

Landscape. 1959-60. Pencil and wash on paper, 5 1/4" x 8 1/4". Signed
- (35-36)

Napeague, L. I. ca. 1980-90. Ink, wash, and watercolor on paper, 8" x 10". Signed
- (37)

Dunes, Montauk. Ca. 1980-90. Ink and wash on paper, 7 1/2" x 9". Signed
- (38)

Dunes, Montauk. Ca. 1980-90. Ink and wash on paper, 7 1/2" x 9". Signed
- (39)

Great Falls, VA. 1961. Ink, wash, and casein white on paper, 7 1/2" x 9 1/2". Signed
- (40)

Pittsburgh, 1961. Ink and wash on oatmeal paper, 7 1/2" x 9 1/2". Signed

- (41) *Great Falls*, VA. 1961. Ink and wash on paper, 7 1/2" x 9 1/2". Signed
- (42) *Great Falls #1*. 1962. Tusche lithograph, 9" x 12". Signed
- (43-46) Untitled. 1969/1970. Mixed media, 5 9/16" x 9 1/2". Stamped and signed at lower right
- (47) *From my Window*. 1965. Casein, charcoal, and collage on paper, 36" x 24". Signed and dated lower right
- (48) *Tree Study*. 1961. Ink, wash, and casein white on gray paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (49-50) *Tree Study*. 1961. Ink, wash, and casein white on gray paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (51) *Tree Study*. 1961. Ink, wash, casein white, and charcoal on greenish-blue paper, 10" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (52) *Tree Study*. ca. 1975-80. Ink, wash, and watercolor on light gray paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (53) Untitled. 1961. Ink and charcoal on paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed lower right
- (54) *Schenley Park*. 1962. Stone lithograph, 16" x 24". Signed artist's proof
- (55) *Great Falls #2*. 1962. 8" x 11 1/4"
- (56) *Montauk*. Ca. 1975-80. Ink on light gray paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (57) *Montauk*. 1980-90. Sepia, ink, and watercolor on paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (58) *Montauk*. 1980-90. Sepia, ink, and wash on paper, 10" x 8". Signed
- (59) *Montauk*. 1980-90. Ink, wash, and white chalk on gray paper, 9 1/2" x 7 1/2". Signed
- (60-62) Untitled (Study for *In the Threshold's Lure* by Yves Bonnefoy). 1999. Gouache, charcoal, ink, and wash on nineteenth-century ledger paper, 8 1/4" x 6 3/4". Artist's stamp lower right and signed

- (63-64) Untitled (Study for *In the Threshold's Lure* by Yves Bonnefoy). 1999. Gouache, charcoal, ink, and wash on blue composition paper, 7 3/4" x 6 1/2". Artist's stamp lower right
- (65) Untitled (Study for *In the Threshold's Lure* by Yves Bonnefoy). 1999. Gouache, charcoal, ink, and wash on nineteenth-century ledger paper, 8 1/4" x 6 3/4". Artist's stamp lower right
- (66-67) From *In the Threshold's Lure*. 2000. Etching and aquatint, 16 1/2" x 14". Signed
- (68) Untitled. Ca. 1975. Charcoal, gouache, and collage on antique paper, 19 1/4" x 16 1/2"
- (69) Untitled. Ca. 1975. Charcoal, gouache, and collage on antique paper, 24" x 16 1/4"
- (70-75) *Figure Studies from Life*. 1961. Ink, wash, sepia, and casein white on paper, 4" x 6"
- (76) *Figure Studies*. 2008. Gouache and charcoal on pink paper, 8" x 6 1/2"
- (77) *Figure Studies*. 2008. Gouache and charcoal on purple paper, 8" x 6 1/2"
- (78-79) *Figure Studies*. 2008. Gouache and charcoal on paper, 9" x 7 1/8"
- (80) *Figure Studies*. 2008. Gouache and charcoal on blue paper, 9" x 7 1/8"
- (81) *Figure Studies*. 2008. Gouache and charcoal on paper, 9" x 7 1/8"
- (82) Untitled (Study for *Eternities* by Charles Simic). 2008. Gouache and charcoal on paper. 22" x 17 5/8"
- (83) Untitled (for poem no. 4 *Buddhas and Santas* by Alfred Brendel). 2005. Etching. 8" x 10". Signed
- (84-87) Untitled (for *The Axe from all Sides* by Yves Bonnefoy). 2005. Etching and aquatint. 8" x 10"
- (88-91) Untitled. 2008. Bronze, unique edition, approximate height 7"
- (92) Untitled. Ca. 1972. Bronze, unique edition, height: 12 1/2"

EARLY PORTRAITS (1958 – 1960)



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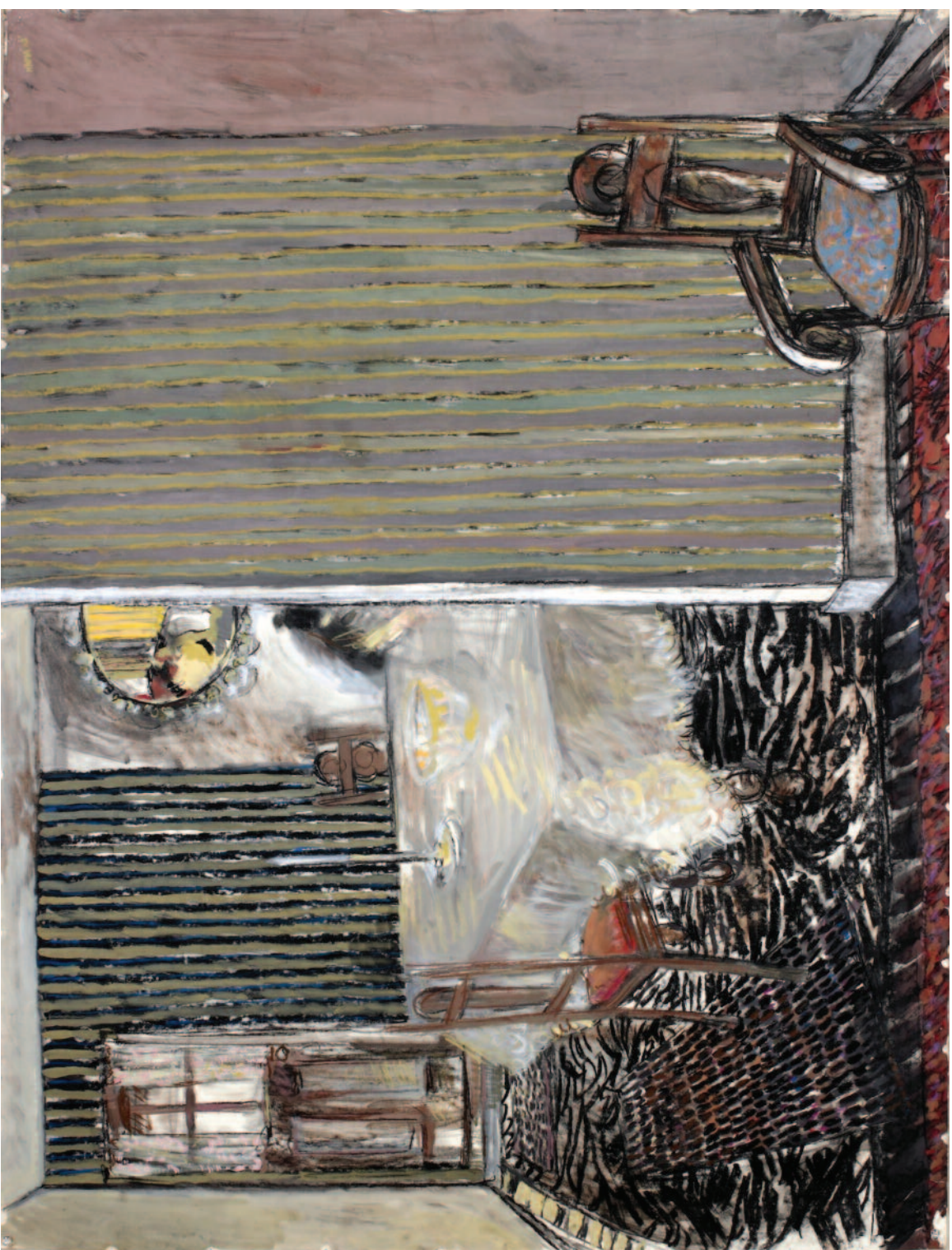
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PITTSBURGH (1959 – 1962)

Light and the density of darkness is always a mystery. The steel mills created a definition of a landscape with the darkness of the structures spurting sparks of light and fire into the sky. I gravitated toward the explosive light and the drama of space that was created. Man seemed to be absent and the drama of the night was uncontrolled and majestic.

From the artist's journals











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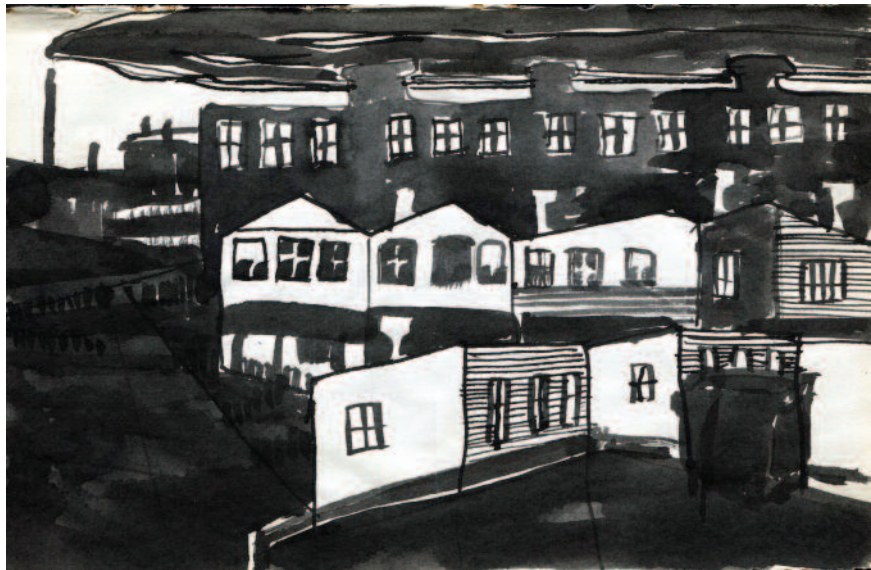


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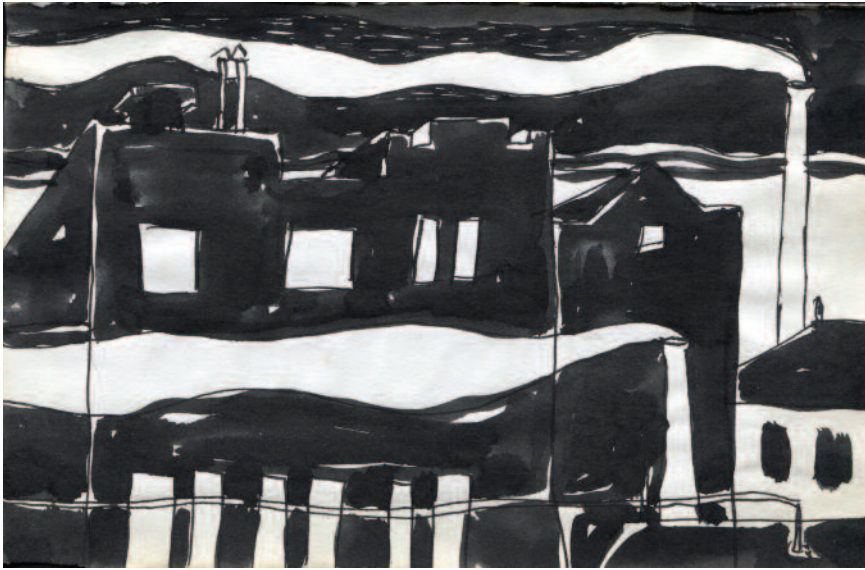
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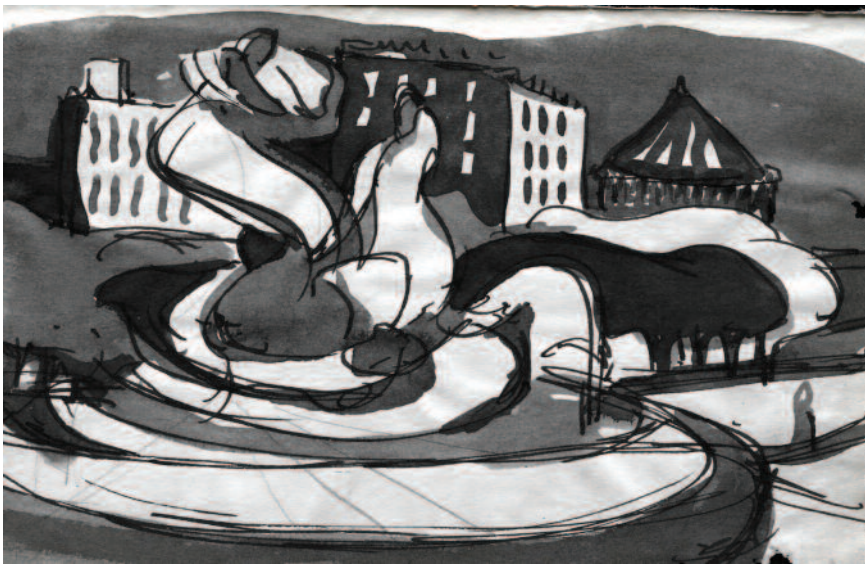
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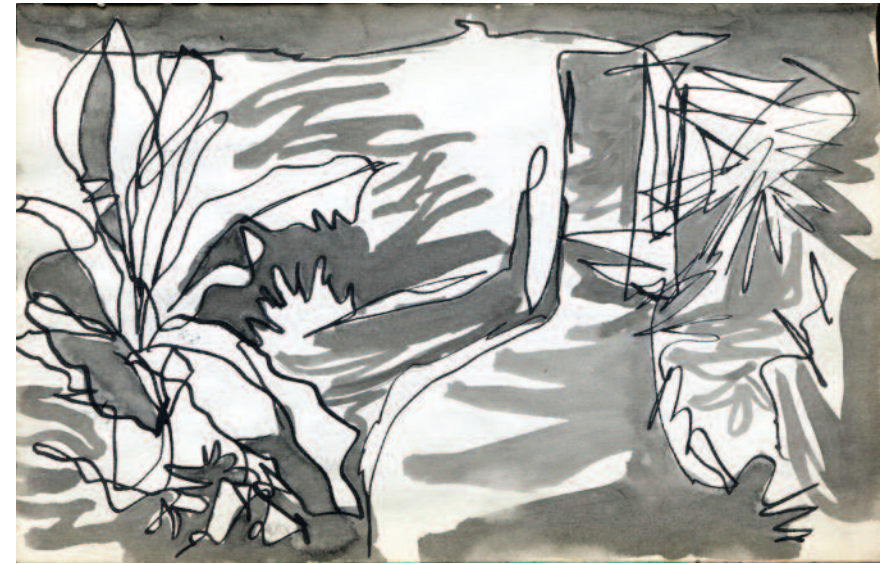
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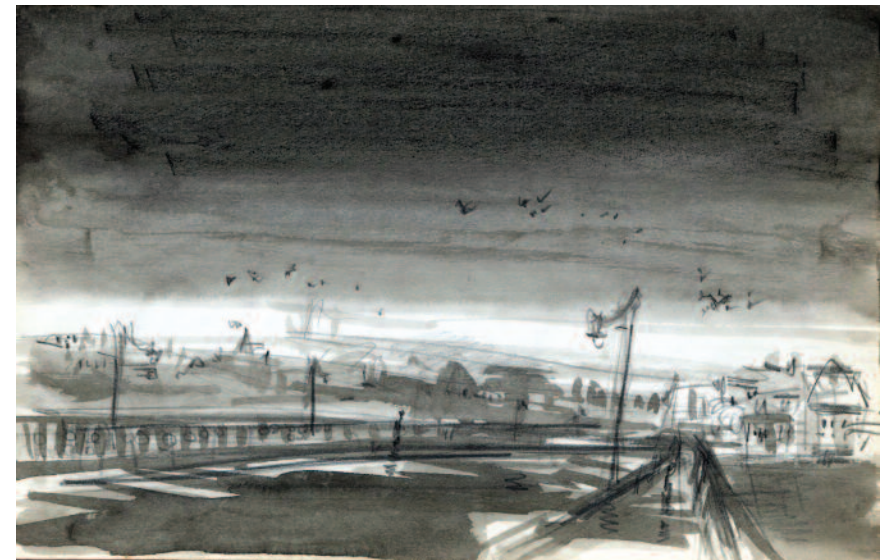
LANDSCAPES (1960 – 1980)

Subtle changes are an observation that can be sensitized, which I find most interesting. It has been said that changes are apparent when one takes the same path consistently. When one journeys on the same path, it is impossible to make the same footsteps.

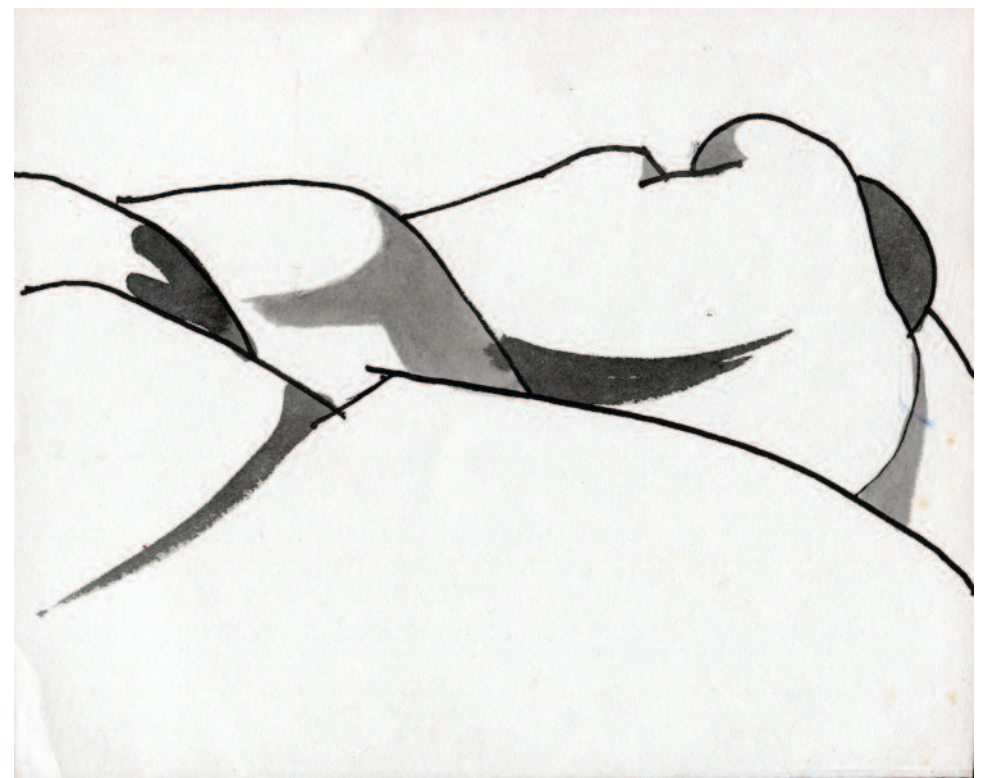
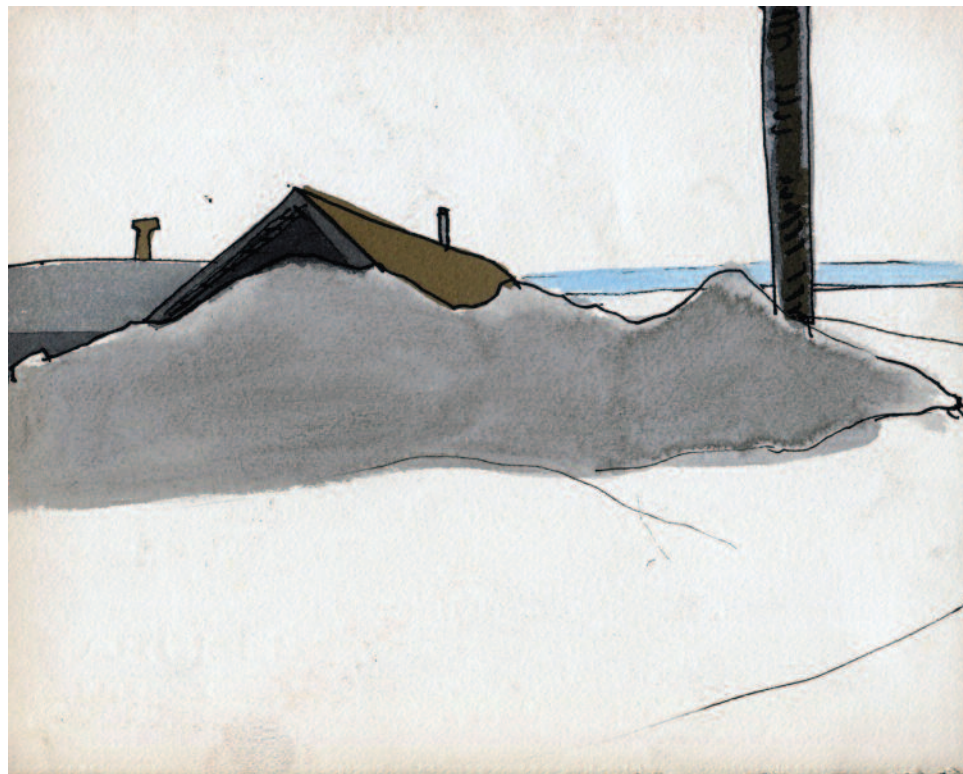
From the artist's journals



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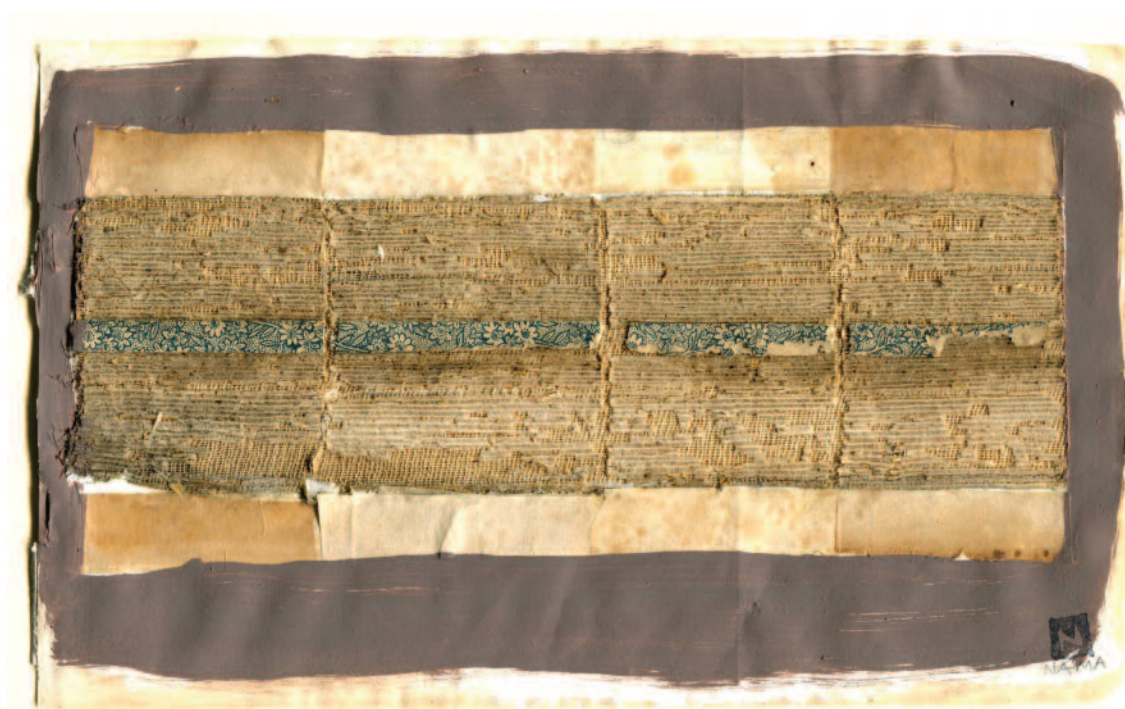




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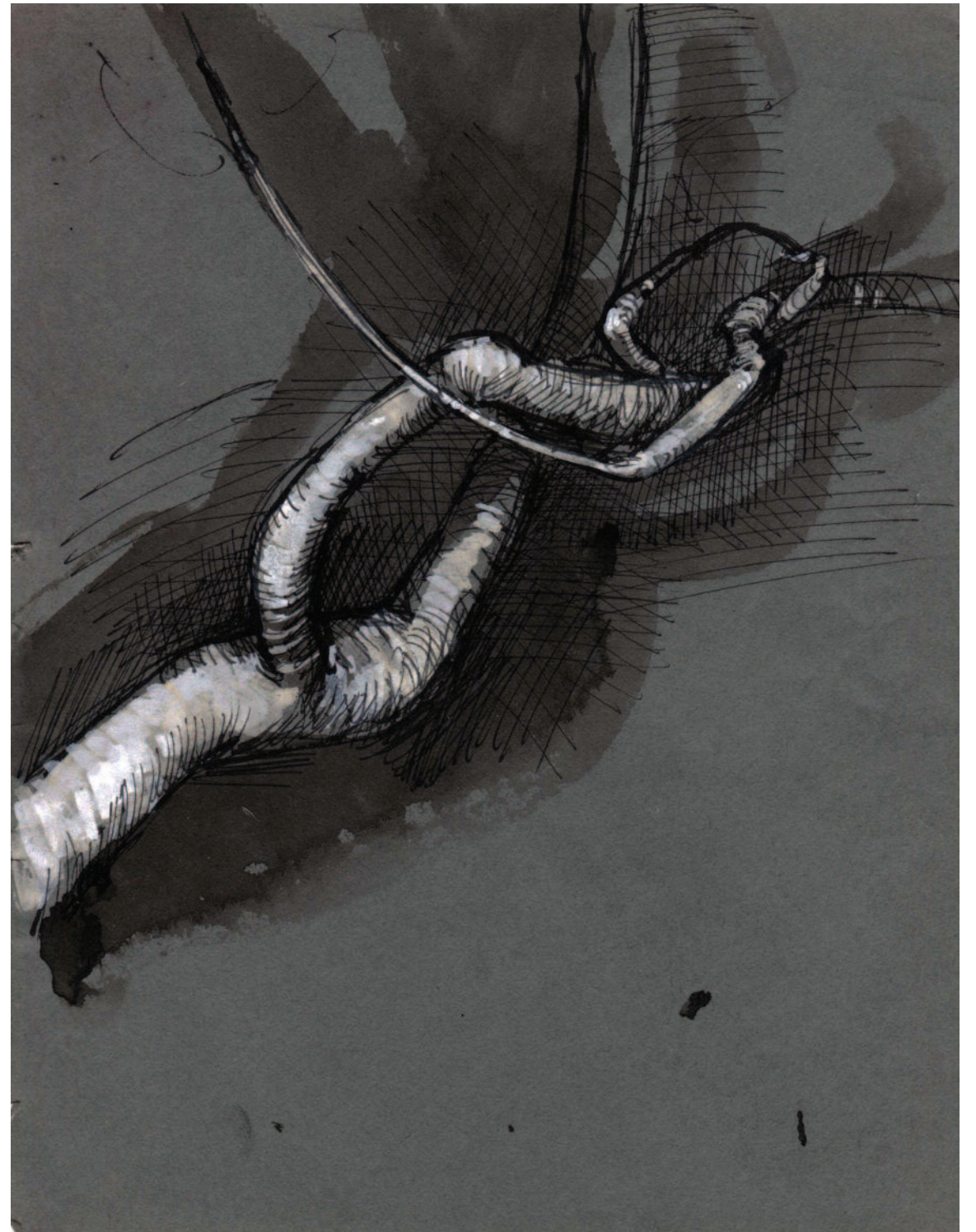


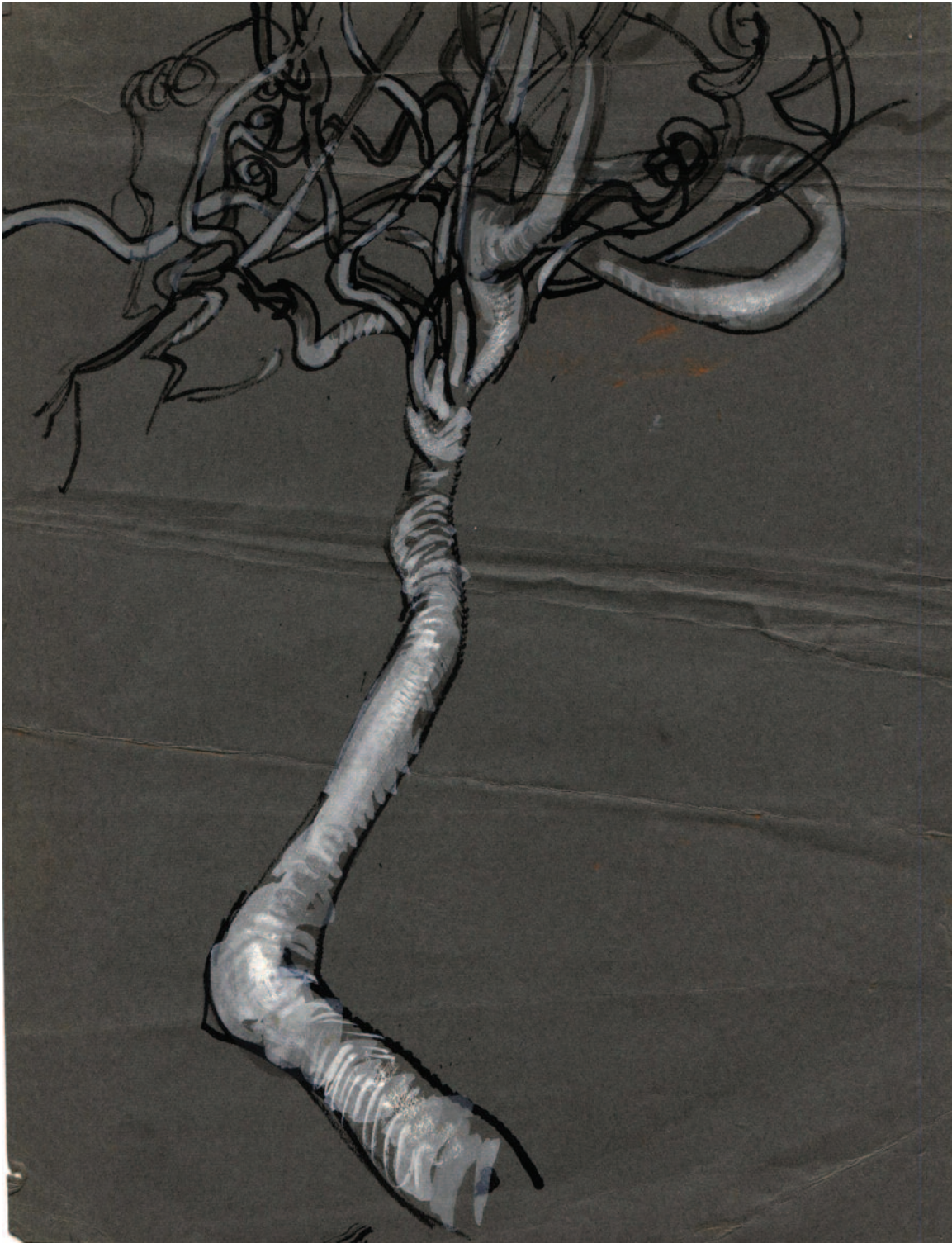
EVOLUTION OF TREE FORMS (1961 – 2000)

I am convinced that wandering in the unconscious is an important part of the creative process. It is in that void and unknown space that the most interesting images are found.

My interests are inward, where I can get lost and confused. Defining an image is an unconscious activity for me. I know that the conscious references are lost in a profusion of chaos after which a new image is excavated.

From the artist's journals









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FIGURES (1961 – 2008)

ON CREATING OR FINDING AN IMAGE

As soon as I find a state of confusion and darkness I realize how singular the emotion is. The forms are so evasive I must work quickly and even then the image is in transience and will disappear. The life of an image is that it is changing. My goal is to realize a form before it disappears which I often revisit to reactivate its energy.

To revisit an image is to see it as a different form because of its ongoing changes. An image cannot relocate itself in the same space. It becomes a pulsating character with its own life. These characters are unpredictable and can create instances of shock to me as they appear. They are in the present state only for a short time before disappearing. Sometimes I can catch them and sometimes I lose them.

From the artist's journals



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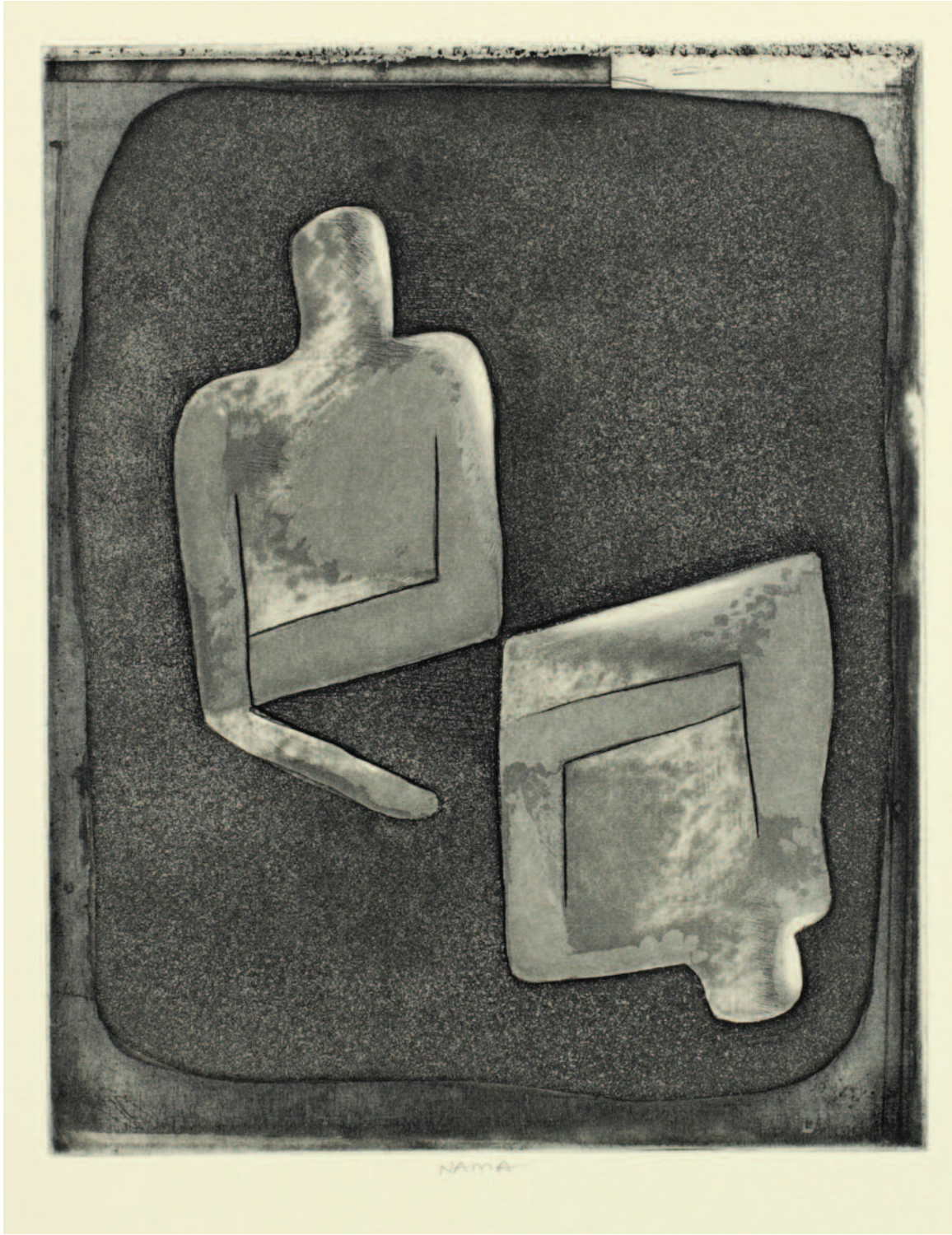
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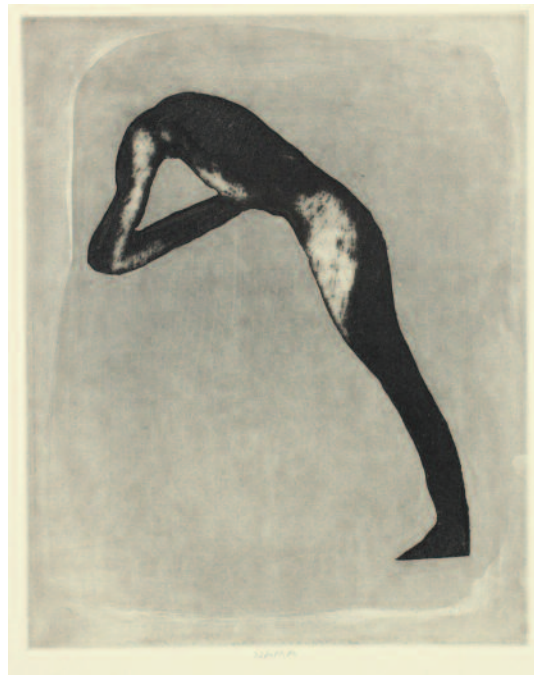


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SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Shepherd W & K Galleries, New York
- 2011 Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York
- 2010 Boston Athenæum, Boston
- 2009 Galerie Claude Van Loock, Brussels, Belgium
- 2008 Galerie Chantal Grangé, Paris, France
- 2008 Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, Munich, Germany
- 2008 Schleswig Holstein Music Festival at St. Petri, Lübeck, Germany
- 2008 Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York
- 2007 Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, Munich, Germany
- 2007 Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Inc., Los Angeles
- 2006 Galerie Patrick Derom, Brussels, Belgium
- 2006 Galerie Arnoldi-Livie, Munich, Germany
- 2006 Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York
- 2005 *Yves Bonnefoy: poésie et peinture 1993-2005*, Tours, France
- 2004 Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Inc., Los Angeles
- 2003 Galerie Arts et Lettres, Vevey, Switzerland
- 2003 Gallery Artemisia, Paris, France
- 2003 Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York
- 2003 Galerie Patrick Derom, Brussels, Belgium
- 2002 Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Inc., Los Angeles
- 2001 University of New Haven, New Haven, Connecticut
- 2001 Shepherd & Derom Galleries, New York
- 1983 *Landscapes: Work of the Early Sixties*, Zenith Gallery, Pittsburgh
- 1975 Diogenes International Galleries, Athens, Greece
- 1974 Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York
- 1970 Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, Pennsylvania
- 1969 Associated American Artists Gallery, New York
- 1967 Galerie d'art, Brussels, Belgium
- 1965 Print Club, Philadelphia
- 1964 Agra Gallery, Washington, D.C.
- 1964 University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
- 1963 Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Bibliothèque municipale, Tours, France

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France

Boston Athenæum, Boston

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

Carnegie Institute Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Morgan Library and Museum, New York

Musée Jenisch, Vevey, Switzerland

National Academy Museum, New York

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

Smithsonian Institution, National Collection of Arts, Washington, D.C.

Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut