

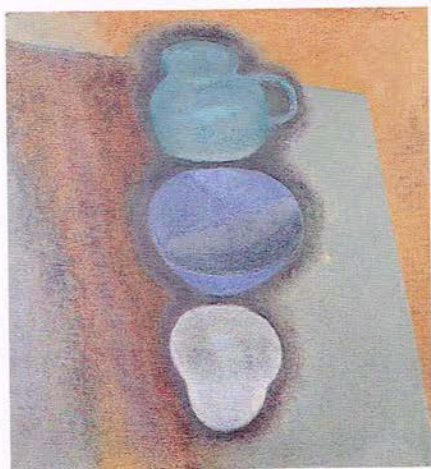


Joseph Ablow

Still-Life

A Personal Iconography

Recent Paintings



TRIO

Oil on Canvas, 16 × 14¹⁵/₁₆" , JA151

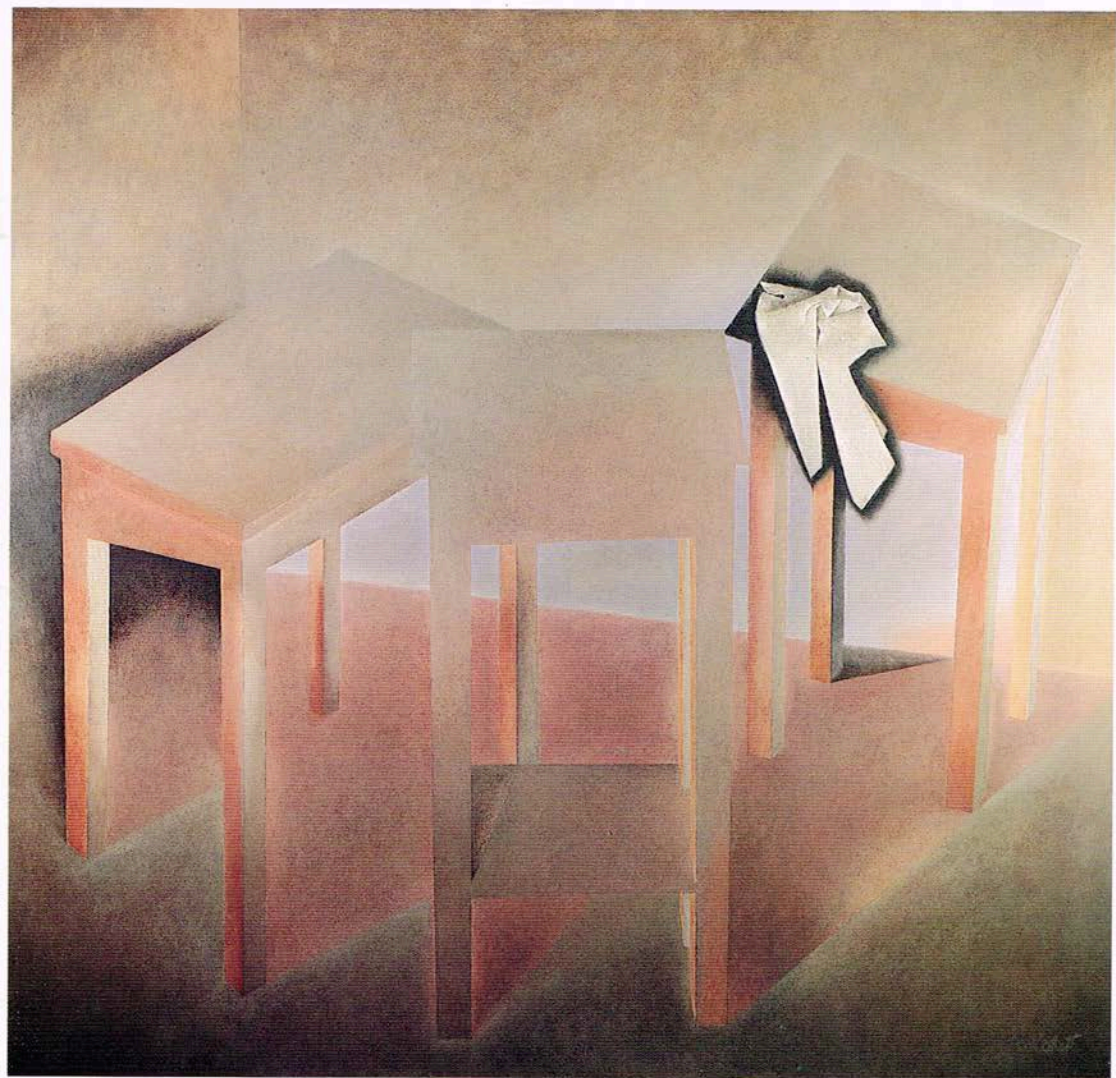
Joe Ablow describes his work on paintings such as *Duo* and *Congregation* as "conversations with a table." For the artist, the experience of still-life is one of deep engagement with seemingly mundane objects, an opportunity to explore and solve problems of form and arrangement. But what does still-life offer the viewer? The artist's metaphor suggests that these paintings ask more of their viewers than mere looking; they require the active participation of a true conversation.

This level of engagement with a single work is rare; immediate comprehension of the hundreds of images encountered each day is a necessary skill in modern life. But spending an hour with a single painting offers a radically different experience, a give and take between painting and viewer which allows for deeper understanding.

Congregation, perhaps Ablow's masterpiece, amply rewards this kind of attention. The subject is apparent at first glance; a grouping of three small tables, one of which holds a crumpled piece of cloth. Yet after a few moments the carefully orchestrated formal relationships begin to emerge. A slight diagonal gently divides the painting into two differently colored zones, arranging the space below the table tops into a series of geometric shapes. As the line meets the right side of the canvas, the eye is drawn back to the center by a connecting diagonal leading to a series of triangles formed by the sharp shadows of the table legs. A subtle pattern of shapes fills the canvas, setting up a harmonious and balanced interaction. The overall impression is one of measure and order, but order enlivened by careful asymmetry. The small white drapery on the third table softens the series of intersecting straight lines and provides a splash of light that exists outside the prevailing pinkish-blue tonality of the painting. Far from disrupting the balance of the composition, the drapery acts as a counterpoint, preventing a feeling of frozen perfection. *Congregation* is far more than a record of three tables, it is a meditation on form and space.

If the artist's task in still-life is to explore and re-order every-day visual experience, the viewer's responsibility is to learn from his vision—to enjoy form, to see space, to understand proportion. In Ablow's work the visual experience presented to us is one of harmony and balance, but a harmony and balance only fully achieved through our own deep engagement in a real conversation with the painting.

— P.M.F.



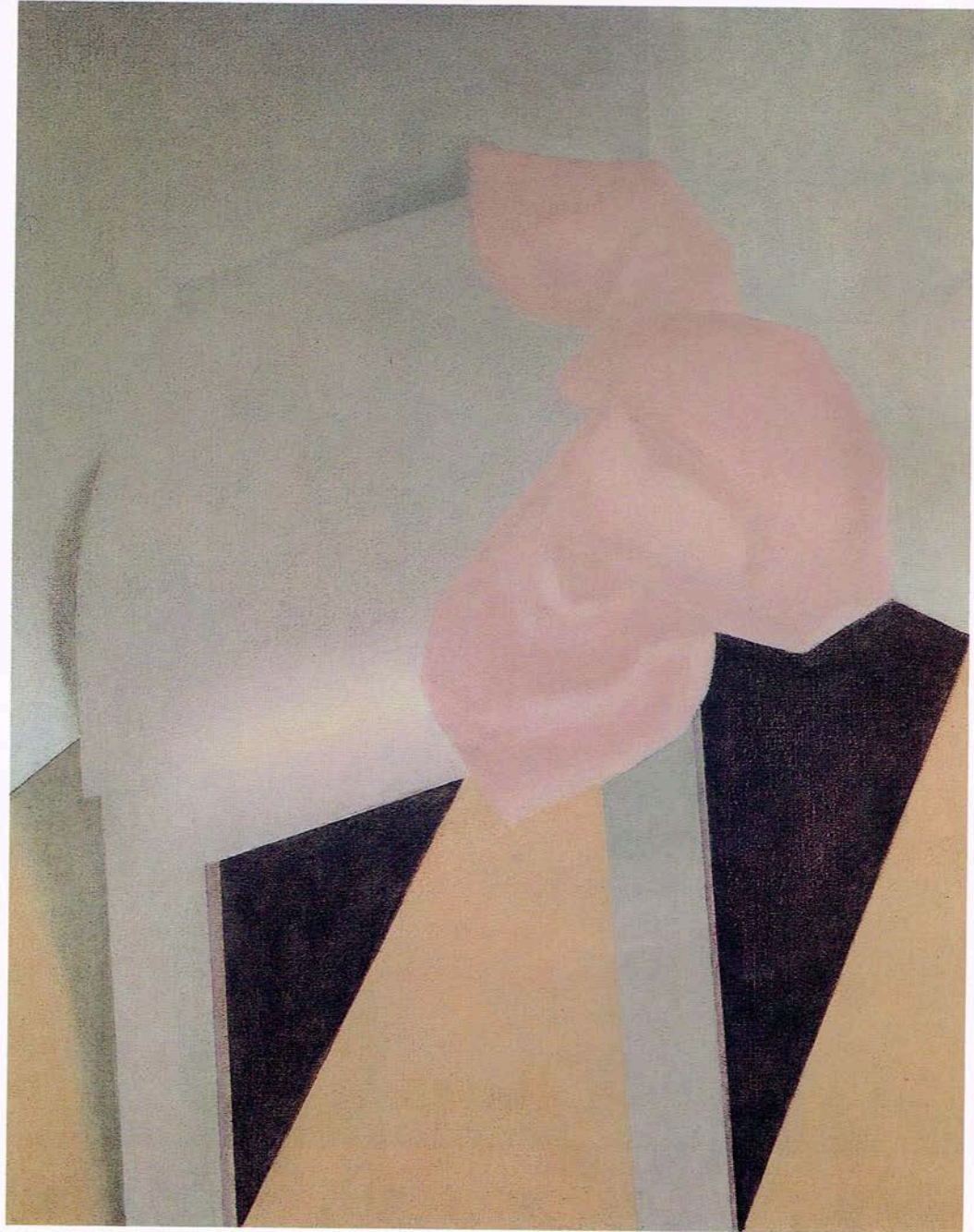
Front Cover

DUO

Oil on Canvas, 50 × 36", JA157

CONGREGATION

Oil on Canvas, 66 × 70¼", JA150



THE KNOT

Oil on Canvas, 38 × 30½", JA166



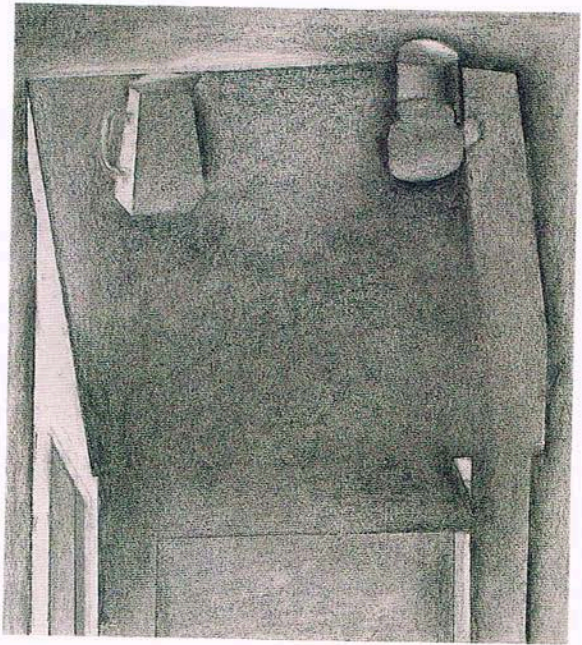
SHAWL II

Oil on Canvas, 26¹/₁₆ × 17⁷/₈", JA153



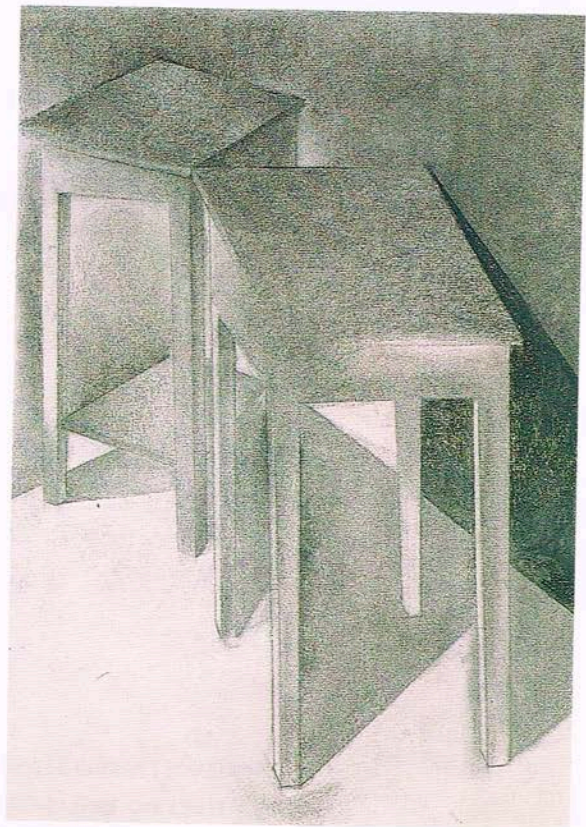
VIGIL II

Oil on Canvas, 48 × 43¹⁵/₁₆, JA158



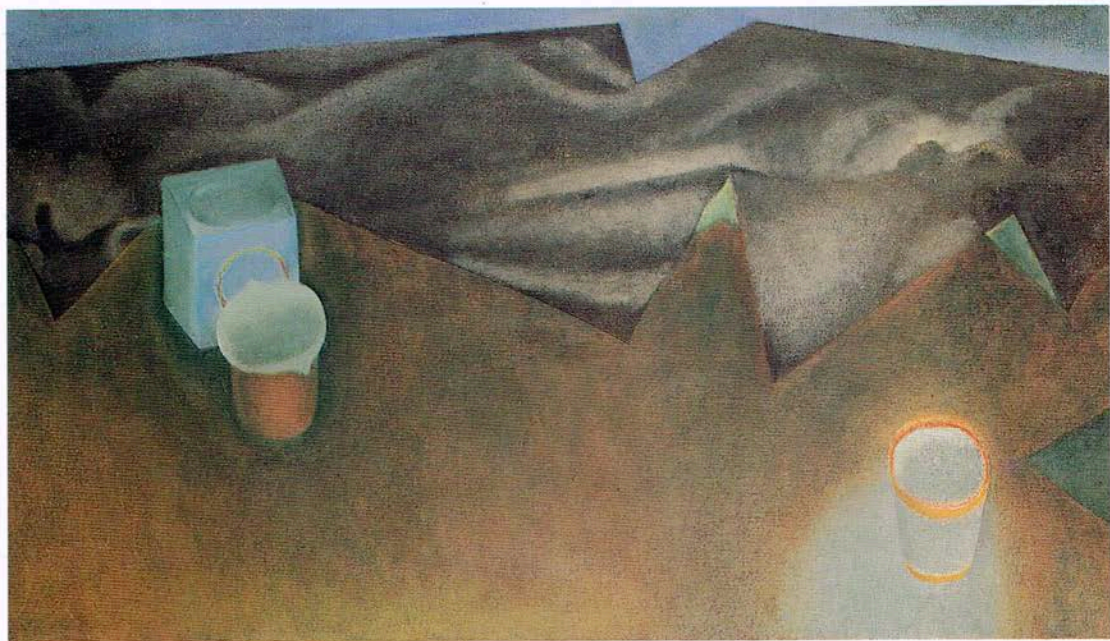
STUDY - VIGIL II

Charcoal, 15½ × 14", JA163



STUDY - TWO TABLES

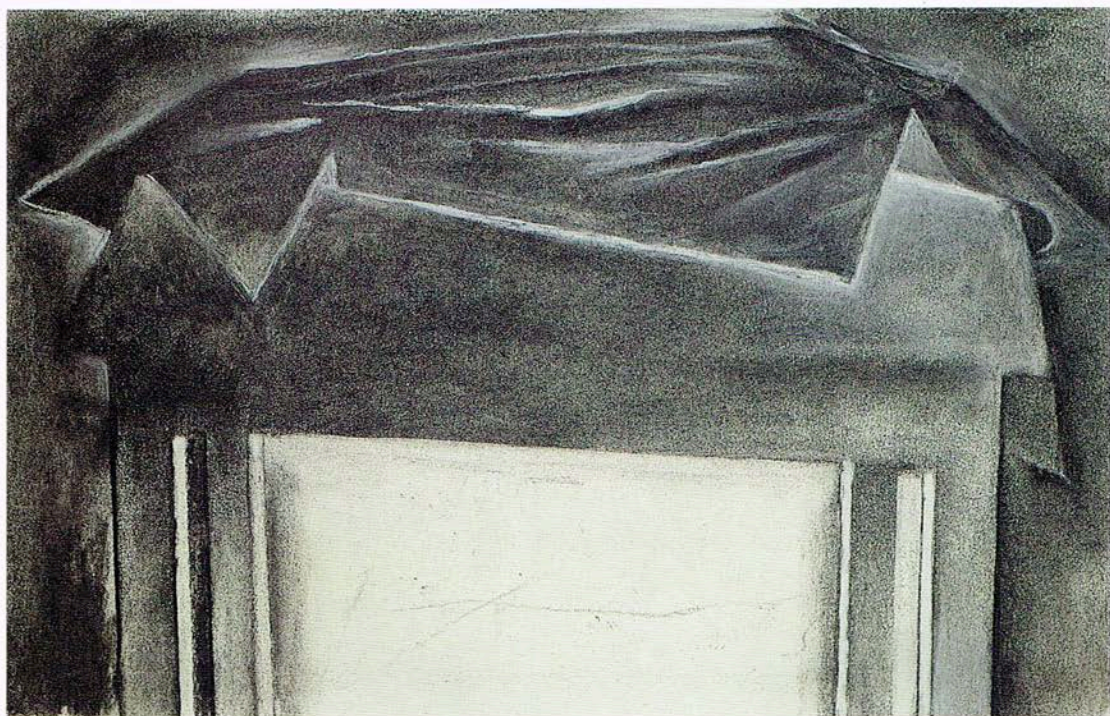
Charcoal, 21 × 15", JA165



MOUNTAIN STILL LIFE
Oil on Canvas, 18¼ × 33¾", JA155



BAROQUE STILL LIFE III
Oil on Canvas, 46 × 62½", JA159



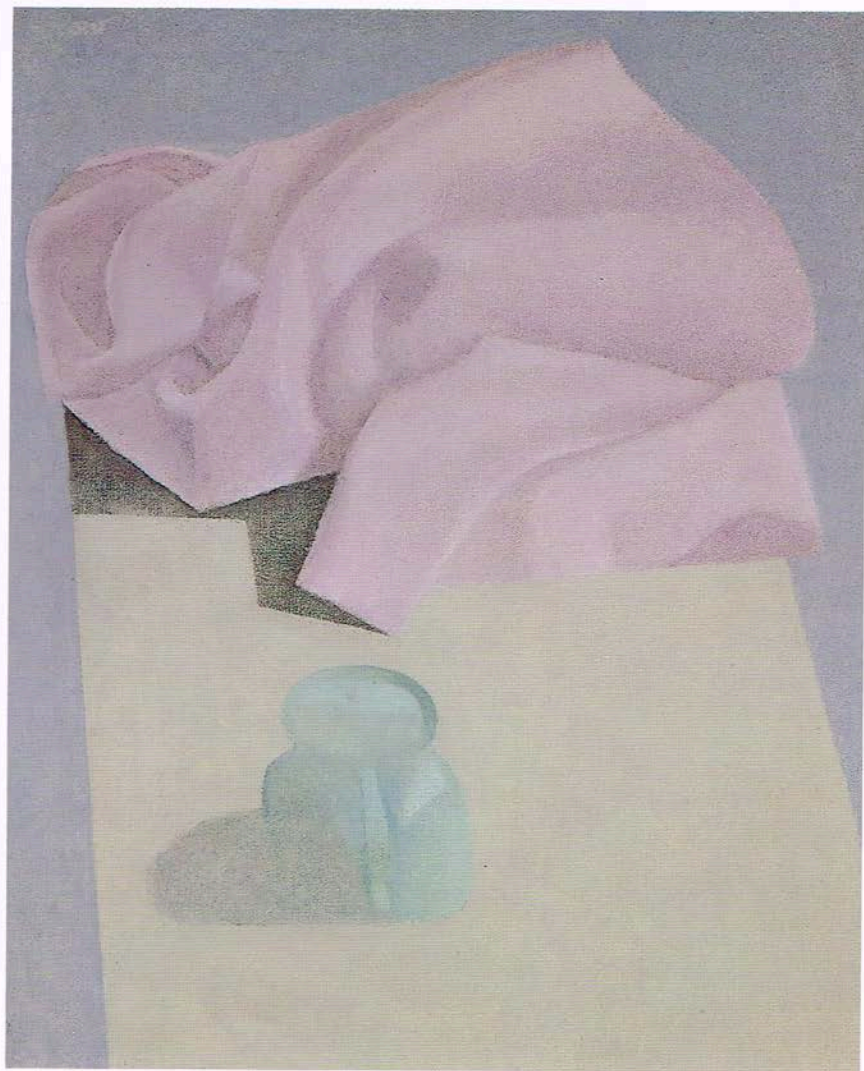
STUDY - PORTAL

Charcoal, 10¼ × 16", JA162



STUDY - SHAWL

Charcoal, 15¼ × 21¼", JA164



SHAWL I

Oil on Canvas, $22\frac{3}{16} \times 18\frac{1}{16}$ ", JA152



MONUMENT

Oil on Canvas, 46 × 62¼", JA125



VESSEL

Oil on Canvas, 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ × 32 $\frac{1}{8}$ ", JA154

STUDY - WRITHING FORM

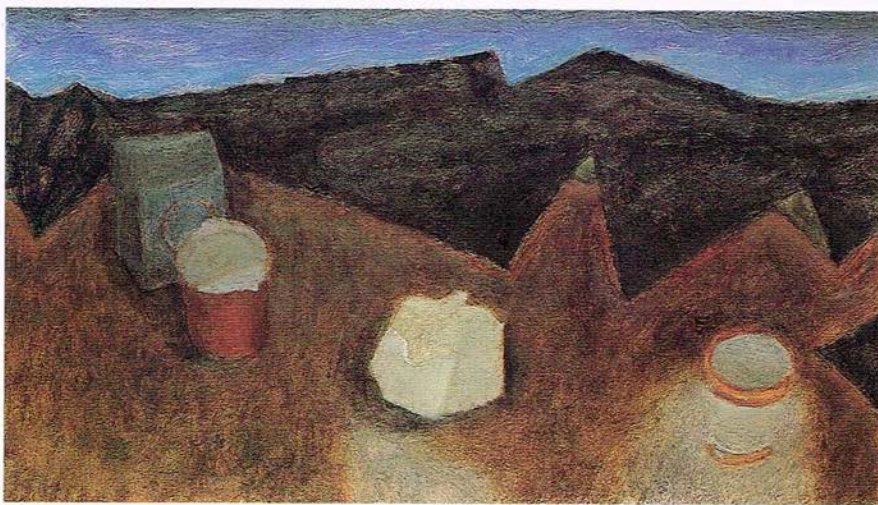
Oil on Paper, 10 × 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", JA160



VIGIL

Oil on Canvas, 48 × 44¼", JA149

Printed in Hong Kong by South China Printing Company (1988) Limited.



STUDY - STILL LIFE - LANDSCAPE

Oil on Paper, 10¼ × 18", JA161

JOSEPH ABLOW

BORN:

1928, Salem, Massachusetts

EDUCATION:

1954 B.A., Bennington College, Art and History

1955 M.A., Harvard University, Art History

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (*partial list*):

Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston, MA; 1991, 1987, 1983, 1981, 1979

Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, MA; 1987

The Trustman Art Gallery, Simmons College, Boston, MA; 1983

Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, MA; 1982, 1976

Rachel W. Davis Gallery, Houston, TX; 1982

Swansborough Galleries, Wellfleet, MA; 1980

Bard College, New York, NY; 1972, 1961

Princeton Gallery, Princeton, NJ; 1971

Boris Mirsky Gallery, Boston, MA; 1969, 1966, 1961

Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT; 1968

Bennington College, Bennington, VT; 1954

Pucker Gallery, Boston, MA; 1994

COLLECTIONS:

Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture

Mead Art Gallery, Amherst College

University of Massachusetts, Harbor Campus

DeCordova and Dana Museum

Middlebury College

Bard College

Rose Museum, Brandeis University

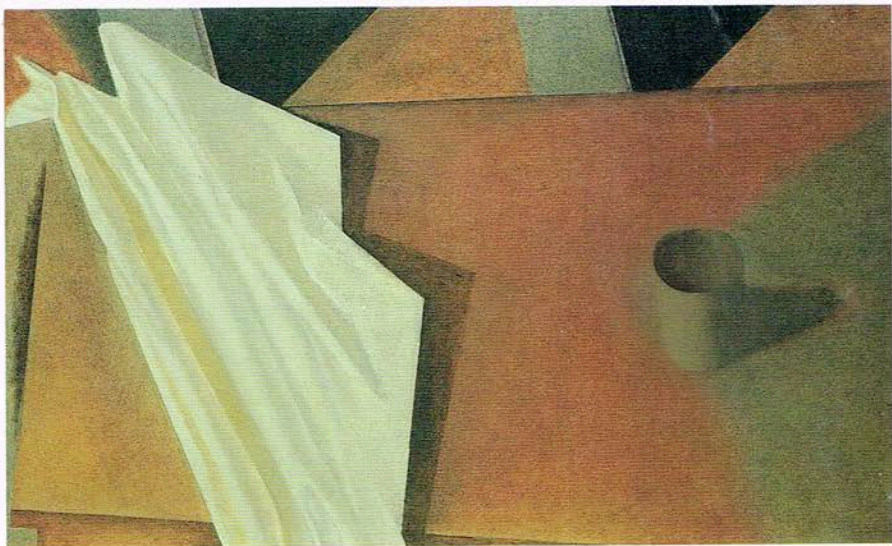
ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

Professor of Art, Boston University; 1972-present

Also has held academic posts at Amherst College,

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wellesley College,

Bard College and Middlebury College



SHADOWS

Oil on Canvas, 22¹/₁₆ × 36¹/₁₆" , JA156

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Recent Paintings

June 11 - July 10, 1994

Reception

Sunday

June 12, 1994

3:00-6:00 p.m.

The public is invited to attend.

The artist will be present.

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