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SAMUEL BAK



Pucker Gallery, Boston

# SAMUEL BAK

In the Presence of Figures  
Recent Paintings



2. *Exits II*, 1998  
34 x 50" BK567

Pucker Gallery, Boston  
17 October –  
30 November, 1998



## Bak's Variations on a Theme by Bak

Lawrence L. Langer

One Mona Lisa is enough. Her enigmatic smile continues to lead viewers into the hidden world of her feminine mystique. Some elusive but durable truth is forever inscribed on her face; various versions of it would only dilute its unique appeal. But if we look at the most famous photograph to emerge from the Holocaust, the little boy in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto with his hands raised, we meet a different kind of portraiture. This is the real image of a doomed child, though we do not know the reason why. Suspended between life and death, fearful of whatever lies ahead, he challenges us to interpret the fate that threatens to consume him despite his innocence. By multiplying the contexts that surround his unearned destiny, by providing alternative scenarios for imagining his story, Samuel Bak has reaffirmed a central paradox of the event we call the Holocaust. Its dead have not been eclipsed by time, but survive like the ghost of Hamlet's father to walk the landscape of memory until some way is found to pacify their troubled spirits.

It may be a fruitless task, but it remains essential to try. Forgetting would be the original sin of a post-Holocaust generation. By summoning us to reflect on this dilemma, by forcing us to focus repeatedly on the legacy of a threatened mortality, Bak creates perspectives for interpretation, compelling us to view and review and re-review the insoluble questions of how the catastrophe could have happened in the first place and how we are to manage the scarred heritage it bequeaths us. He offers ironic variations on

the theme of the eternal return, though here it is an unwelcome cycle we would like to elude. The haunting relics of a wounded past continue to evoke the pain of loss even as the artist struggles to capture on canvas fixed images of the primal ruin.

The maimed landscape of a painting like *Exits* (cat. 51) provokes the imagination to search in a number of directions simultaneously. If the title had been *Expulsions* instead of *Exits* associations with the Eden narrative would have been more spontaneous. Here we are forced to acknowledge how irrelevant is this instance of Jewish innocence destroyed to the fabled Genesis legend of punished guilt. However bright the distant vista behind the boy with his hands raised, however pristine the landscape he is leaving, they cease to be heralds of his future. As his bloodied form proceeds through a broken archway, he gazes with sightless eyes at the crippled tree controlling the center of the picture. Adam and Eve left Eden with a knowledge of good and evil that allowed them to enter into history and made them fallibly human, accompanied by the promise of heavenly concern. But no angels with flaming swords hover above Bak's solitary child, no fruit of temptation or sign of divine justice appears. This seems to be an exit that is also no exit, the only tokens of natural vitality being a leafy sprig springing valiantly from the dead trunk and a few roots searching vainly for a vital source of nourishment. The terrain is cluttered, in disarray, with some scattered shoes lying alongside a large and ominous sheet or canvas

covering a mass of uncertain origin. Could it be corpses of other victims? The woods of Ponary outside Vilna, city of Bak's birth—the boy is more intimately associated with the city in another painting, *The Star of Vilna* (cat. 26) – were not “lovely, dark, and deep” as reported by Robert Frost's traveler but the site of mass executions of tens of thousands of local Jews.

Does *Exits* imply some later entries? As the boy advances, he will encounter only a wooden reflection of himself blocking his way, a hanged effigy whose bullet-riddled surface mocks any resemblance to a crucifixion. The murder of European Jewry remains a maze to the logical and ethical mind, but without supernatural intervention there is no simple escape from such a labyrinth. *Exits* presents a bizarre cemetery haunted by signs of violent death, a place where doleful memory hovers but offers no anaesthetic relief. The patched tree has lost its ancient and symbolic role, whether as a source of life or of the knowledge of good and evil. It is barren of fruit, drained of energy, cropped of its vertical surge toward a consoling sky. The one leafy branch, a memento rather than a harbinger of hope, cannot deflect our shocked recognition from this disenchanting forest of despair.

Bak's landscapes with figures in this series do little to tranquilize the natural panorama. They intensify the spiritual disquietude that atrocity has inflicted on the modern imagination as it seeks to restore unity to a disintegrating self. None of the human shapes in *Eternal Return* (cat. 48) is intact: arms, legs, heads, or other body parts are simply missing, while the metallic wooden wings that once linked men and women to a divine ori-

gin seem burdensome and lifeless, some strewn about on the land as if discarded. The bitten apples on the ground are reminders of an earlier Fall, but if any “rise” has followed, it is not evident in the painting. One might even detect in the head emerging from a primitive radio a parody of the Annunciation as the angel defers to a mechanical announcer and his heavenly message is broadcast as the news of the day.

The *Eternal Return* clearly does not proclaim the immortality of the deathless spirit. Instead, it inspires us to meditate on the meaning of spirit in a century that has witnessed a ceaseless assault on the integrity of the physical self. *Eternal Return* is a diptych joined at the center, but its two halves can be horizontally reversed without disturbing the visual unity of the canvas. The artist can shift his vision without undoing his art. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the reality he depicts. Mangled bodies do not so easily reassemble.

One of Samuel Bak's preferred subjects has been modernized versions of Dürer's *Melencolia I*, in which a winged figure sits brooding over the puzzling mutability of the world and time. A number of fresh renderings appear in this group, each associated with the Jewish experience. But the most explicit allusion to the Holocaust emerges in *Elegy III* (cat. 1), where Bak fuses two of his favorite themes in one canvas. The angelic figure continues to brood, seemingly oblivious to the ghostlike presence of the Jewish child from the Warsaw ghetto with arms raised, nailed cruciform to a splintered wooden remnant of the Scriptural rainbow. Failed promise and renewed hope wrestle for our attention, though the price paid for the

triumph of either would hardly be worth the victory. On the boy's breast glows a yellow Star of David, emblem of pride and shame, while at his feet lie a pile of similar Stars, disappearing into the distance like a trail of rusted leaves. The ironic conjunction of Christian resurrection with Jewish doom leads us into a quagmire of contradiction, while their proximity to the Renaissance quest for enlightenment implicit in Dürer's etching propels us into a reassessment of technical and spiritual progress in the modern era. The looming crematorium chimney that occupies the central space of the painting, rising beyond its upper frame, blocks the prospect of what would have been a spectacular sky. The broken rule in the hand of the winged thinker measures the crooked path history has taken from an age of humanism to a time of mass murder. It leaves us bereft but not utterly forlorn, since it records humanity's ongoing effort to contend inwardly with the forces that seek its extinction.

This is perhaps the most singular achievement of Bak's variations on his own themes. They represent an eternal return themselves, constant reminders of his belief that after events like the Holocaust the restoration of ancient unities becomes an impossible option. These paintings avoid didactic intentions and appeal instead to eyes and intellects willing to confront disfigured truths without sinking into the mire of a nihilistic swamp. Bak echoes earlier myths and religious visions only to dismiss them as he features a world searching for stable values but shorn of the systems that once confirmed them. In a cosmos lacking canons that endorse mass murder, the imagination is free to explore new and often unsettling possibil-

ities, and this is what Bak's variations urge us to do. In *Elegy IV* (cat. 39) we meet again the familiar angelic figure, much enlarged but now more statue-like than human. The Jewish victims in the foreground inherit its melancholy stare. Overhead dark storm-clouds gather, with no sign of divine aid to stay the impending disaster.

Individuals are not singled out in Bak's paintings; he resists the temptation to portray differentiated victims. Although efforts have been made to identify the boy from the Warsaw ghetto, Bak uses him to represent the fate of all murdered children in the Holocaust. A painting like *Group* (cat. 21) offers nearly half a dozen disembodied versions of the boy in a grotesque ballet of doomed youth, some of them so drained of individuality that they have reverted to the shape of one-dimensional faceless wooden mannequins. A title like *Group Portrait* would mock their condition; as a *Group*, they meet us with the anonymous magnitude of their loss.

If *Return to Paradise* (cat. 3) seems to contradict this idea, with its customary sitting for a family portrait, that may be because our need for normalcy initially overrides the more somber implications of the painting. The Garden of Eden and its bitten apple now share their terrain with a Star of David and the remains of a crematorium chimney, intertwining ancient Scriptural legend with the modern calamity. Judging from the pained glaze in the subjects' eyes, the members of this family do not share a happy intimacy. Although the patriarch sits in quiet dignity, the adjacent figure, presumably his wife, is swathed in cloth, perhaps a funeral

shroud. Many Holocaust survivors hold up similar photographs near the end of their testimony, though it is never clear whether the impact of this gesture is to revive vital memories of those killed or to remind us of their sudden and unnatural deaths. The tension between presence and absence that animates so much Holocaust discourse is central to Samuel Bak's explorations of Jewish memory after that event. *Return to Paradise* challenges us to decide whether it represents a tribute to a past preserved, or a future erased.

The same question can be asked about numerous other works in this series. Jewish culture is a culture of assaulted identity and transplanted roots, of wandering and reassertion. One cannot help finding in many of these paintings signs of the artist's personal grief, of his lost family and disrupted and damaged childhood, of his shifting habitats and search for a permanent home. A quintet of canvases built around the image of the boy suggests an ongoing quest for a visual memorial appropriate to these themes. *Sanctuary* (cat. 30) offers an altar, *Study for a Monument* (cat. 36) a tablet, *Children's Corner* (cat. 38) a garden of statuary, *In His Own Image* (cat. 37) a new version of creation, and boldest of all, *In the Footsteps* (cat. 28) a revised dispensation from Sinai, whose original covenant could not forestall the murder of European Jewry. In each work the doomed child looms over or out of the landscape, his stony stare a permanent notice that any future renewal must include the journey toward extinction that he shared with his people. *Self Portrait with Friends* (cat. 35) is perhaps the most explicit expression of that recurrent motif.

We bear the burden of our besieged past with the barely consoling knowledge that its spiritually diminished legacy is shrunken but not yet extinct. Jewish rituals, traditions and beliefs are still passed on "from generation to generation," but it is no longer an exhilarating event. This is the import of the half dozen paintings of this name. In *From Generation to Generation III* (cat. 45) holy men of old bless their descendants, but their gazes are turned earthward and all their faces are ancient and sad, purged of youthful vigor. No hint of Hasidic joy lights up their eyes. There is no easy solution to the question of how we transplant the roots of Jewish memory after the catastrophe. In *Symposium* (cat. 4), sages debate the dilemma of where to seek fertile soil in fact and imagination for the surviving remnants. Roots dangle from a suspended tree awaiting transplantation, while a thin rod horizontally piercing the trunk mocks the promise of resurrection. The theme is repeated in *Culture of Roots* (cat. 7), *Into the Trees* (cat. 13), and *At Rest* (cat. 10). During the Nazi era forests were simultaneously a safe haven and a place of slaughter. Bak duplicates this discrepancy in his landscapes of destruction and migration. In *Remembrance* (cat. 14) he insists that the two are inseparable and in *Inner Journey* (cat. 9) he fuses them, making the surviving victim the porter of his moveable fortune and the viewer an accomplice to that fate. We return again and again to this theme, like the wise men of *Symposium*, puzzling about its meaning and trying to map out a destiny for this uncertain future.

Among the most intriguing paintings in this series are the six variations on the string quartet theme. Here subject and strategy



3. *Return to Paradise*, 1996  
44 x 50 1/8" BK482

fuse into a musical metaphor that silently echoes the difficult question of whether it is possible or even desirable to seek form and beauty from the chaos of the Holocaust. Bak offers no single answer, but his variations on the theme raise the issue of how such a dissonant past affects efforts to reestablish harmony in the present—in human relations, thought, belief and much else that once contributed to a unified universe of the spirit. When T. W. Adorno argued shortly after the end of World War II that it was barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz – a view he later modified and subsequently withdrew – he may have meant that it was impossible to write poetry after Auschwitz the way we wrote poetry before Auschwitz, as if Auschwitz had never happened. Bak's cunning device of inviting an audience to hear sound where none exists entices his viewers into the arduous task of post-Holocaust creation. Like sculpture, painting is a silent art, given a "voice" only through witnessing and interpretation. Tradition is of little – or much less – value in fostering understanding because of the sharp disruption in human and artistic continuity introduced by the Holocaust. The shifts in spacing, vista, perspective and coloration in the string quartet group of paintings convey the absurdity and the necessity of repeated visitations to unmanageable burdens that must nonetheless be borne. Has this not been the very rhythm of survival in our century of recurrent atrocities?

*Exercise in Memory* (cat. 17) introduces us to many of these themes. Dominated by a Monet haystack of stringed instruments that are more likely candidates for a funeral pyre, the painting inverts both practice and posture in its rendition of the art of the



4. *Symposium*, 1996  
22 x 26 1/4" BK467

string quartet. Deprived of their most precious treasure, the forlorn musicians ply their art using twigs for bows, sawing the air like amputees who continue to feel their twitching limbs long after they have been severed. Are they "playing" in the fading twilight, or greeting an encroaching dawn? Whose memory is being exercised – theirs, or ours? And what is being recalled – their painful loss or the melodic beauty that preceded it in more peaceful times? Normally a quartet is a dialogue among performers, but here we seem faced by four musical monologues as each member sits with his back toward the discarded instruments caught in

a moment of solo concentration. Is this authentic art or mere pretense, the barbaric imitation that Adorno feared?

There is an encyclopedic quality to the questions raised by Bak's paintings. They solicit us to write fresh entries for old definitions, as if the former ones had been exhausted of their meaning and relevance by the traumatic events that engulfed them. The metamorphosis of a haystack into a pyramid of ruined instruments reminds us that more than a way of seeing nature is at stake – the very future of art, the creative act itself hangs in the balance. Bak's inventive varia-

tions duplicate the chore of wresting artistic promise from the wreckage of a ravaged civilization, though it is hard to imagine that *Exercise in Memory* asks us to hear anything other than the sounds of a requiem falling from this quartets' improvised bows. Casualties such as these can hardly be expected to produce a hymn of praise.

True to his commitment to variations on a theme, however, Bak introduces just such a possibility in *Music for the Rainbow Angel* (cat. 20). No sooner are we suffused with the atmosphere of one painting than we are driven into the disconcerting diversity of another. The rich coloration of this canvas together with its allusion to Scriptural imagery of hope implies a celebratory mode, but ironic overtones in the details should make us wary of hasty evaluations. The war-weary musicians, one with a bandaged head and two still in military uniform, evoke the universe of force from which they have emerged. Only wings betray the presence of a Rainbow Angel. Whatever other substance, if any, that spiritual being is endowed with remains hidden behind the curtain. We are left to decide whether we are faced with the illusion or the reality of a new covenant; slim evidence leaves the issue shrouded in uncertainty. Also behind the curtain lies a more somber sign, an empty stone coffin or sarcophagus, suggesting that the realm of remembered death is not far off. A rising ladder whose base may indeed be fixed in the tomb hints at escape and renewal, though such portents in a Bak painting more often tempt than lead us toward final insight. Is art inspired or abandoned by divine illumination? The dirge and the hymn of praise are no longer mutually exclusive in the struggle toward artistic

expression. The paradoxical alternatives built into this canvas implicate the viewer in the challenge to unravel its contradictions. The visual journey coexists with the intellectual one, as the eye of the mind works ceaselessly to integrate its interpretive energies.

Each version of the quartet introduces perspectives that cause us to modify our previous conclusions. In *Public Space* (cat. 18) the musicians have disappeared entirely or remain as ghostly silhouettes of their disembodied selves. Their instruments here have more substance than they do. The presence of an audience suggests some form of communication – they do not play in vain. But how do we “hear” or “see” an art of atrocity, the funereal tones that emerge from this landscape of ruin? The building in the background has its windows bricked-up like blinded eyes, silent witness to a wraithlike performance. Fragments of arms and splintered bows invade the *Public Space* of the painting with private memories that we share through inference rather than overt statement. This memorial concert is a lamentation, suffused with the anguish of the closing sections of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* symphony. As conductor Kurt Mazur has said of that music, though his remark can be extended to Bak's painting, “There is beauty there, but if it would convince, it should hurt.”

Art that reflects the losses of the Holocaust can be a major art, but in a minor key. We do not normally associate painting with a hurtful beauty, but Samuel Bak has done much to acquaint us with its principles. There is a monumental grace to the gestures of his maimed musicians, who firmly resolve to resume their music even while knowing

that it must contain the desolate past they have survived. In *Final Movement* (cat. 15) they play between an adjacent chimney and a windswept coast, the one a reminder of the death that nearly consumed them, the other an invitation to new voyages and uncertain shores. But, as in the other quartet paintings, the players never resume the fleshly substance of their former selves. They are shadows, statues, wooden props, masked, bandaged – partial beings, never complete. They are forced to flourish in an atmosphere inhospitable to their intentions. They impose themselves on the landscape, as does the boy from the Warsaw ghetto; together they persuade us that the realms of the living and the dead are no longer distinct. The boy survives in memory, emblem of a lost and unrecoverable childhood; the quartet is tainted by his death, as are we all. Whatever we appreciate in the spiritual vision of these paintings is limited by the spectacle of creatures partly drained of their vitality, as we brood like the angelic figures in the *Elegy* series on a human destiny that few anticipated and no one can acclaim.

The most nullifying line in all of English drama may be the one uttered by King Lear as he kneels over the corpse of his daughter Cordelia: “Thou'lt come no more. Never, never, never, never, never.” In his “theme and variations” paintings Bak reverses Lear's words, introducing a version of tragedy that allows for the persistent presence of the dead. The eternal return of painful Holocaust memory is one of the inescapable legacies of that disaster. Bak's art patiently multiplies our perspectives, afflicting modern consciousness with an ironic enrichment of its impoverished past. ■





5. *The Wanderer III*, 1996  
50 x 34" BK436



6. *The Wanderer II*, 1968-96  
50 x 34" BK437



7. *Culture of Roots*, 1996  
30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK462



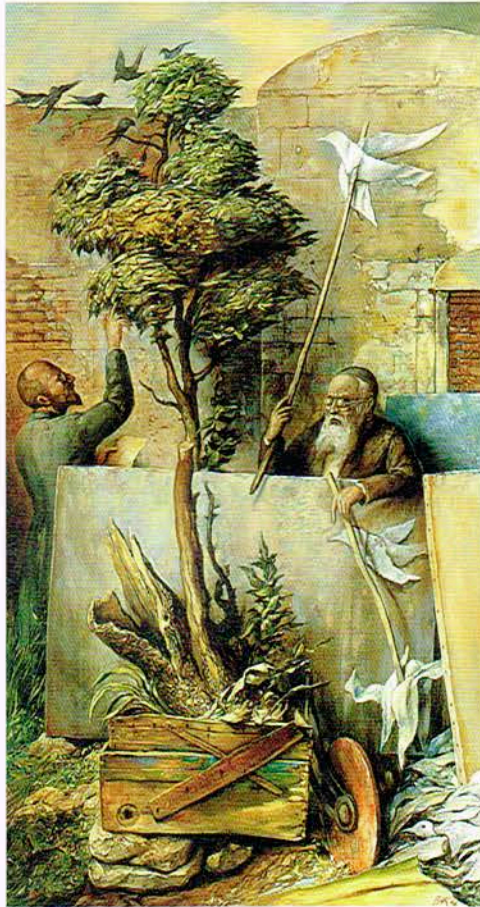
8. *Prolongation*, 1996  
30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK457



9. *Inner Journey*, 1996  
30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK459



10. *At Rest*, 1996  
30 1/8 x 16 1/8" BK461



11. *In a Kingdom of Metaphors*, 1996  
30 1/8 x 16 1/8" BK460



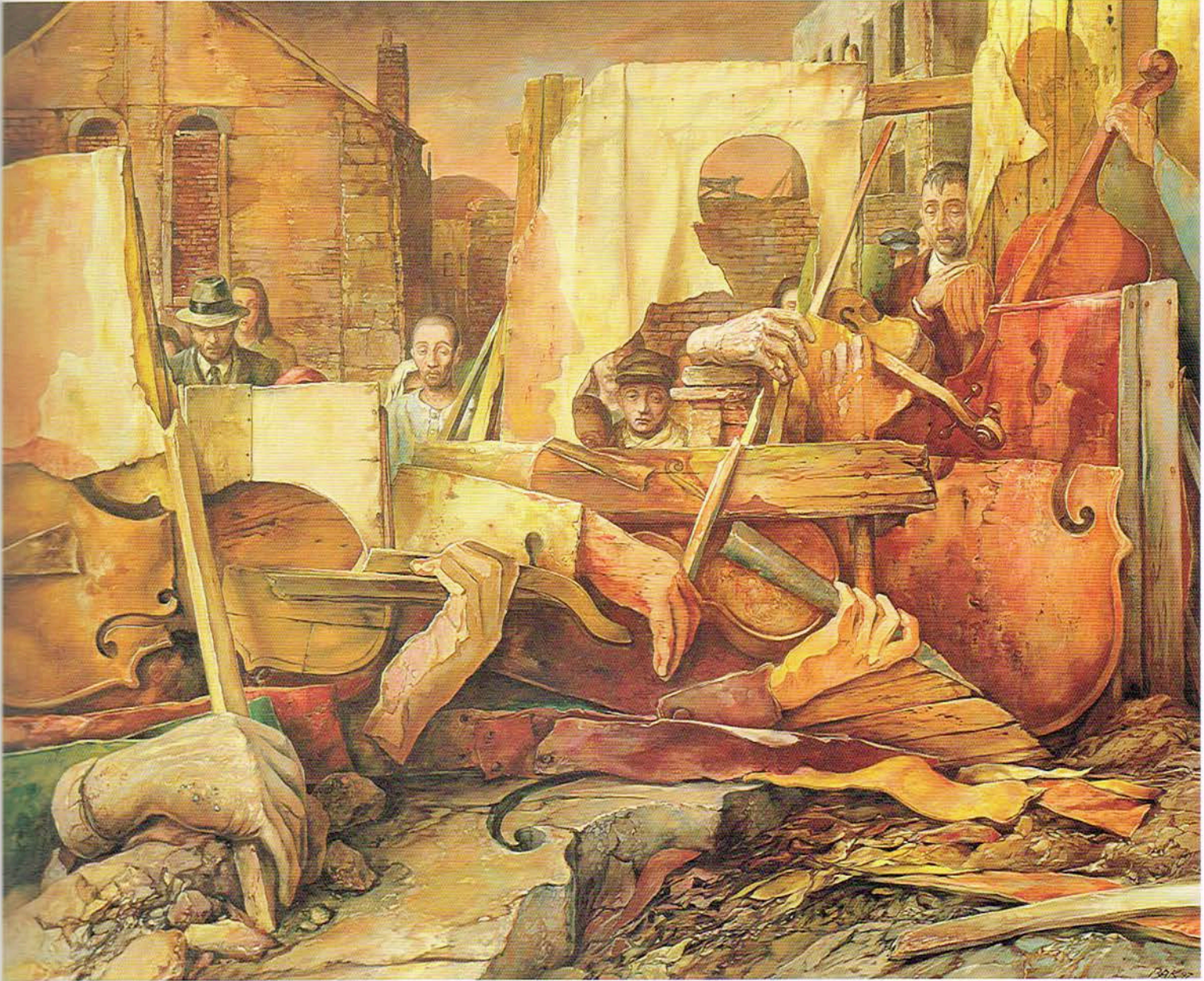
15. *Final Movement*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK568



16. *Interlude*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK571

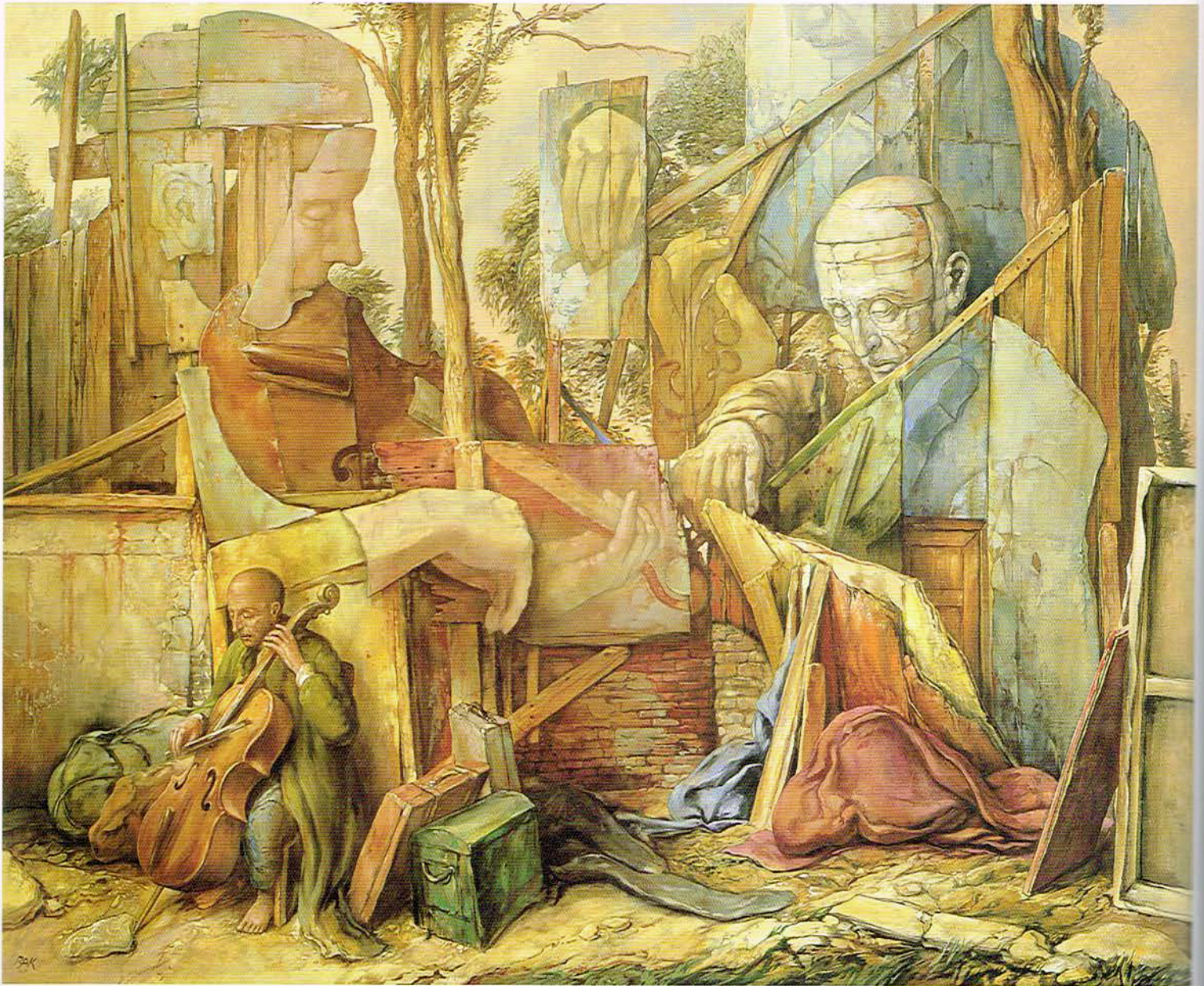


17. *Exercise of Memory*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK569

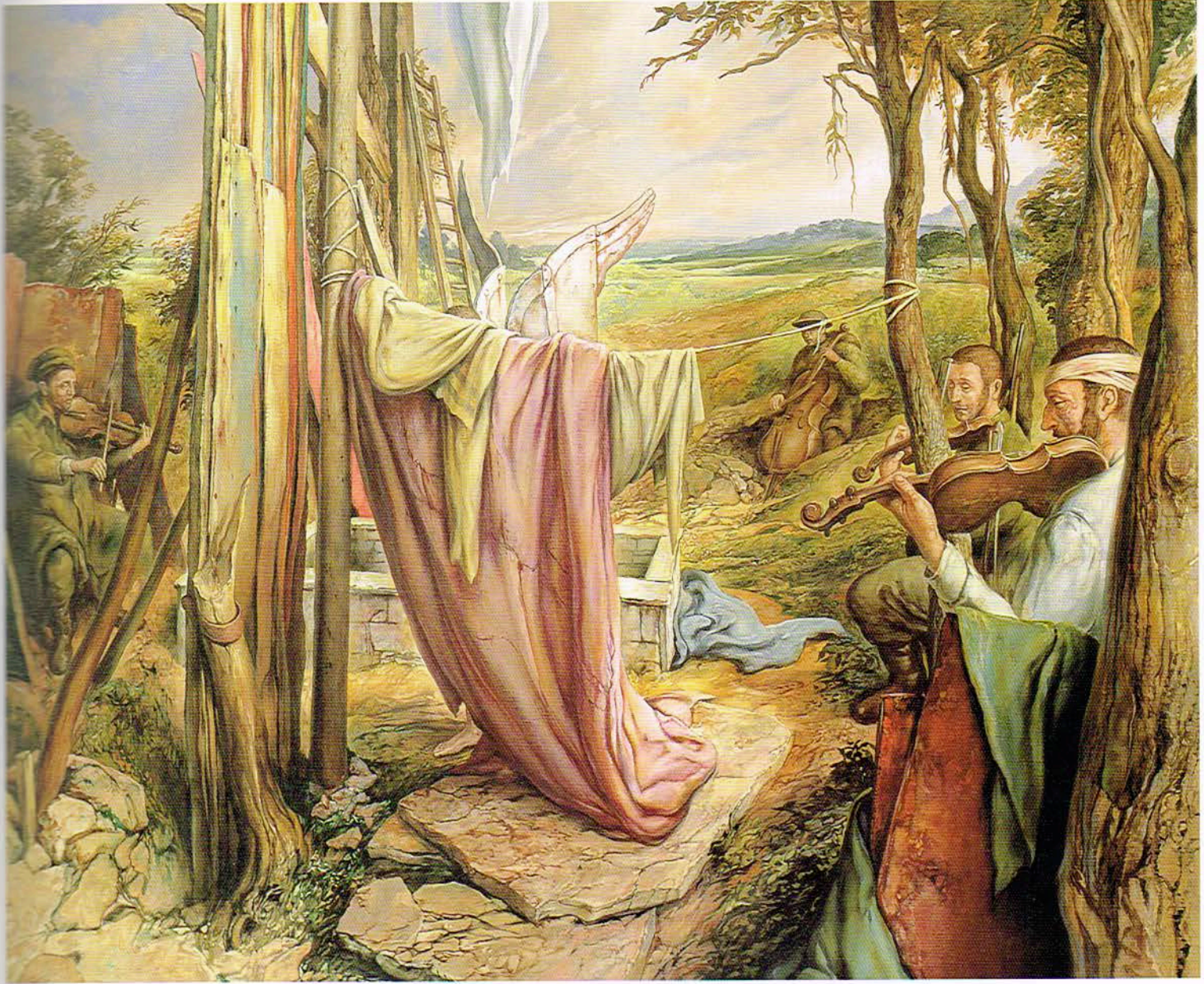


18. *Public Space*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK566

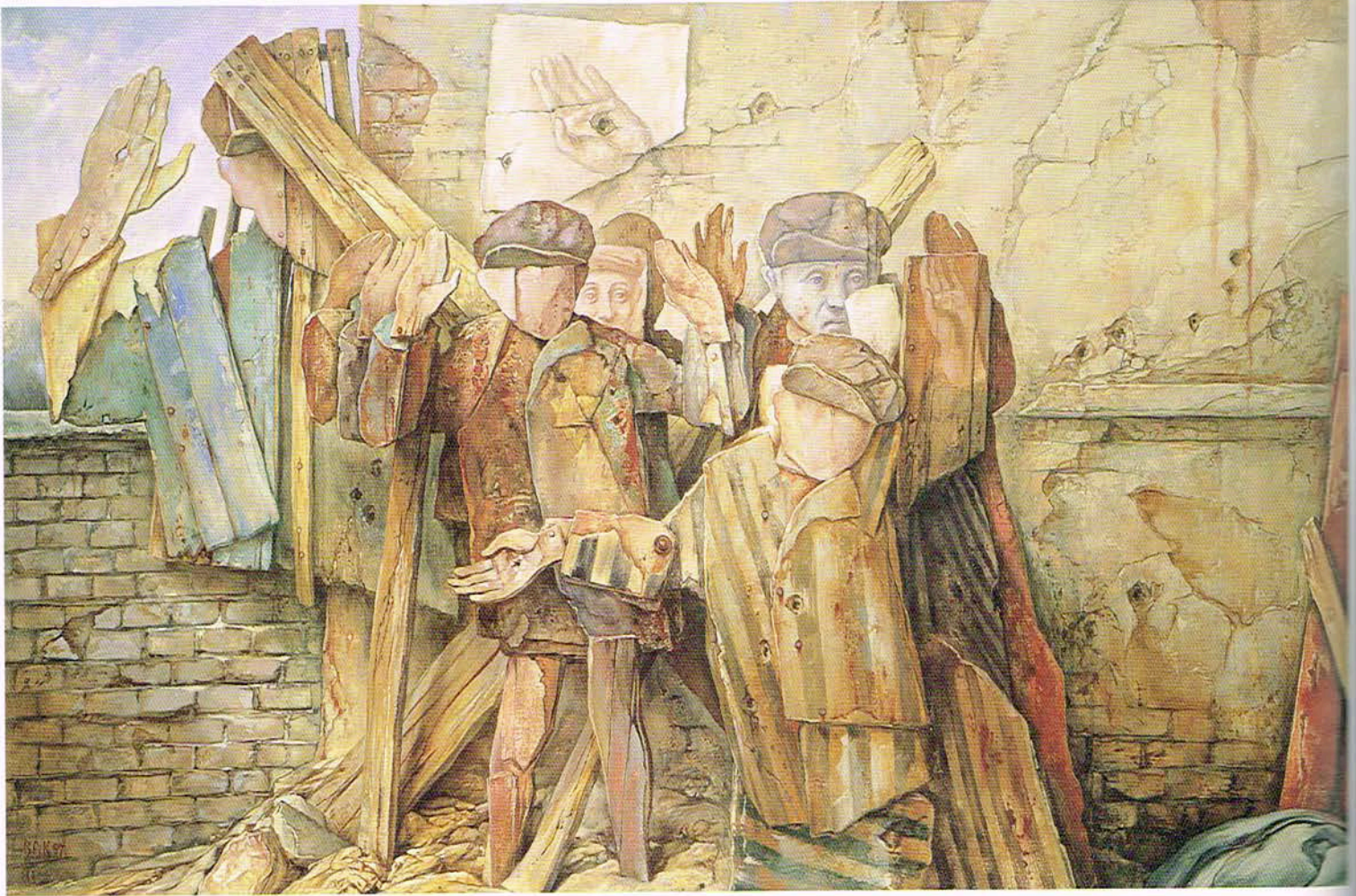




19. *Familiar Tune*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK570



20. *Music for the Rainbow Angel*, 1998  
32 x 39" BK572



Above:  
21. *Group*, 1997  
26 1/4 x 39 1/2" BK519

Left:  
22. *Rainbow Boy*, 1997  
18 1/2 x 15" BK531

Right:  
23. *Messenger*, 1997  
18 1/2 x 15" BK530



24. *Little Green Trees*, 1997  
26 x 32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" BK520



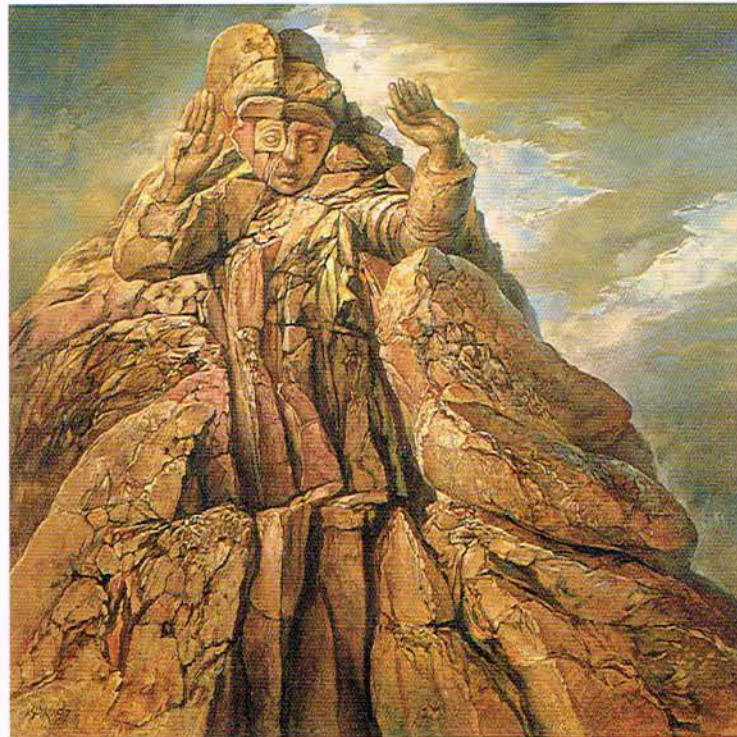
Left:  
25. *Small Target*, 1997  
14 x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK518



Right:  
26. *The Star of Vilna*, 1997  
14 x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK517



27. *Double Reflection*, 1997  
20 1/2 x 20" BK523



28. *In the Footsteps*, 1997  
20 1/8 x 20" BK525

Opposite page:  
29. *Absence*, 1997  
20 1/8 x 20" BK529







31. *Study of Hands*, 1997  
10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" BK534



32. *Sanctuary*, 1997  
20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 20" BK526

Opposite page:  
30. *Aleph-Ah!*, 1997  
20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK524





Left:  
33. *Passage*, 1997  
14 x 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" BK516



Right:  
34. *Into the Trees*, 1997  
16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13" BK535



35. *Self Portrait with Friends*, 1997  
18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 22" BK538



36. *Study for a Monument*, 1997  
15 1/4 x 19 1/2" BK528

Bottom left:  
37. *In His Own Image*, 1997  
11 x 13 1/4" BK515

Bottom right:  
38. *Children's Corner*, 1997  
15 1/8 x 18" BK527



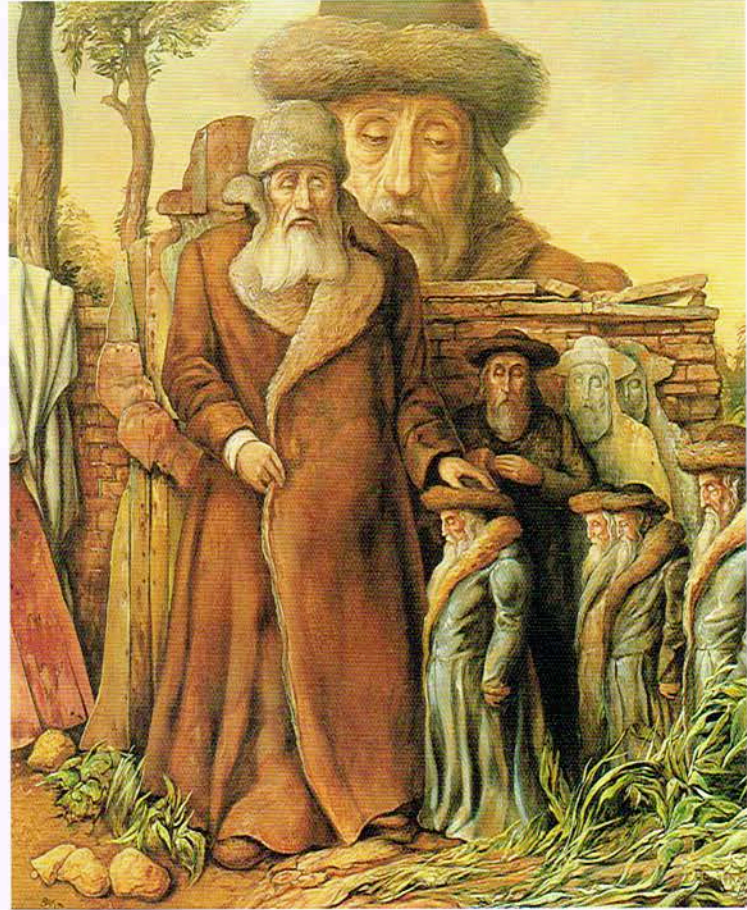


39. *Elegy IV*, 1997  
47 1/2 x 51 1/2" BK546



40. *Elegy II*, 1997  
47 1/2 x 51 1/2" BK544





Opposite page:

41. *From Generation to Generation*, 1968-96  
39 x 28" BK438

Left:

42. *From Generation to Generation V*, 1996  
32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK475

Right:

43. *From Generation to Generation IV*, 1996  
32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" BK474



Left:  
 44. *Monument to the Idea of Generations*, 1996  
 32 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 26 $\frac{1}{8}$ " BK476

Right:  
 45. *From Generation to Generation III*, 1996  
 32 $\frac{1}{8}$  x 26 $\frac{1}{8}$ " BK473



46. *From Generation to Generation  
and Beyond*, 1996  
32 1/4 x 39" BK479







47. *The Eternal Return*, 1997 (State A)  
63<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 63<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" each BK514

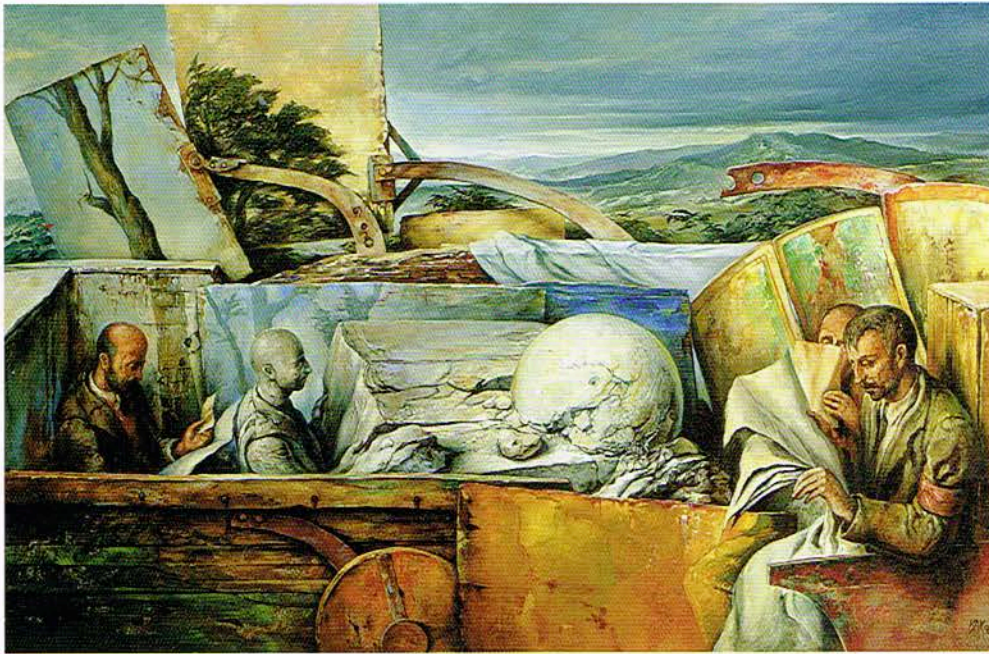




The *Eternal Return* was created as a diptych whose panels could be reversed. The painting is illustrated on pages 34-35 in one state, and above in its reverse state.

Above:  
47. *The Eternal Return*, 1997 (State B)  
63 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 63 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" each **BK514**

Opposite page:  
48. *Experiments in Wisdom II*, 1997  
63 x 63" **BK512**



49. *Transplantations*, 1996  
20 1/4 x 30 1/4" BK469



50. *Passing News*, 1996  
20 1/4 x 30 1/4" BK468

## Samuel Bak

1933	Born 12 August in Vilna, Poland.	1956-59	Lived in Paris. Studied at the
1940-44	Under German occupation: ghetto, work-camp, refuge in a monastery.		"Ecole des Beaux-Arts."
1942	First exhibition of drawings in the ghetto Vilna.	1959-93	1959-66 lived in Rome;
1945-48	Displaced Persons camps in Germany; studied painting in Munich.		1966-74 in Israel;
1948	Emigrated to Israel.		1974-77 in New York City;
1952	Studied at the Bezalel Art School, Jerusalem.		1977-80 in Israel;
1953-56	Army service.		1980-84 in Paris;
1956	Received the First Prize of the American-Israeli Cultural Foundation.		1984-93 in Switzerland.
			1993 Moved to Weston, Massachusetts.

### Solo Gallery Exhibitions

Galleria Schneider – 1959, 1961, 1965, 1966	Ketterer Gallery, Munich – 1977.	Galerie de la Cathedrale, Fribourg – 1991, 1992.
Galleria Liguria – 1963.	Amstutz Gallery, Zurich – 1978.	Galerie Picpus, Montreux – 1991, 1992.
L'Angle Aigu, Brussels – 1965.	Vonderbank Gallery, Frankfurt – 1978.	Pucker Gallery, Boston – 1993.
Alwin Gallery, London – 1965.	Goldman Gallery, Haifa – 1978.	"Landscapes of Jewish Experience"
Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv – 1966.	DeBel Gallery, Jerusalem – 1978, 1980.	Pucker Gallery, Boston – 1995.
Roma Gallery, Chicago – 1967.	Galerie Levy, Hamburg – 1980.	"The Fruit of Knowledge"
Modern Art Gallery, Jaffa – 1968.	Thorens Fine Art, Basel – 1981.	Pucker Gallery, Boston – 1996.
Pucker Safrai Gallery, Boston – 1969, 1972, 1975, 1979, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991.	Kallenbach Fine Art, Munich – 1981, 1983, 1984, 1987.	"Landscapes of Jewish Experience II"
Hadassah "K" Gallery, Tel Aviv – 1971, 1973, 1978.	Soufer Gallery, New York – 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1997.	George Krevsky Fine Art, San Francisco, CA - 1998. -
Aberbach Fine Art, New York – 1974, 1975, 1978.	Galerie Ludwig Lange, Berlin – 1987.	Pucker Gallery, Boston - 1998.
	Galerie Carpentier, Paris – 1988.	"In the Presence of Figures"
	Galerie M.A.G., Paris – 1989.	
	Galerie Marc Richard, Zurich – 1990.	

## Group Exhibitions

- The Carnegie International,  
Pittsburgh – 1961.
- “Image and Imagination”, Tel Aviv  
Museum – 1967.
- “Jewish Experience in the Art of the  
20th Century,” Jewish Museum,  
New York – 1975.
- International Art Fair, Basel –  
1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1986.
- “Nachàbilder,” Kunstahalle,  
Hannover – 1979.
- “Bilder Sind Nicht Verboten,”  
Stadtische Kunstàhàlle,  
Dusseldorf – 1982.
- “Still Life,” Tel Aviv Museum – 1984.
- International Art Fair, Ghent – 1986.
- “Chagall to Kitaj”, Barbican Art Center,  
London – 1990.
- “Witness and Legacy”, Travelling Group  
Exhibition in North America –  
1995 - present.

## Public Collections

- Boston Public Library,  
Boston, Massachusetts.
- DeCordova Museum,  
Lincoln, Massachusetts.
- Dürer House, Nuremberg.
- F.L. Loeb Museum,  
Vassar College, Poughkeepsie,  
New York.
- Germanisches National Museum,  
Nuremberg.
- German Parliament, Bonn.
- Hobart & William Smith College.
- Hood Museum, Dartmouth College,  
Hanover, New Hampshire.
- Imperial War Museum, London,  
United Kingdom.

- Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
- Jewish Museum, New York.
- Kunstmuseum, Bamberg.
- Municipality of Nuremberg.
- National Gallery of Canada,  
Ottawa, Ontario.
- National Museum of Lithuania, Vilnius.
- Philips-Exeter Academy, Exeter, NH.
- Rose Museum, Brandeis,  
Waltham, Massachusetts.
- University of Haifa, Israel.
- Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel.
- Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem.
- Vaud State, Switzerland.
- Jüdisches Museum, Stadt Frankfurt am  
Main, Germany.

## Monographs/Books

### Chess as Metaphor In the Art of Samuel Bak,

Jean Louis Cornuz. Boston  
& Montreux, 1991.

### Samuel Bak, The Past Continues,

Samuel Bak and Paul T. Nagano.  
David R. Godine, Boston, 1988.

### Bak, Monuments to Our Dreams,

Rolf Kallenbach.  
Limes Verlag, Weisbaden &  
Munich, 1977.

Bak, Paintings of the Last Decade,  
A. Kaufman and Paul T. Nagano.  
Aberbach, New York, 1974.

### Ewiges Licht (Landsberg: A Memoir 1944-1948),

Samuel Bak. Jewish Museum  
Frankfurt, 1996.

### Landscapes of Jewish Experience,

Lawrence Langer.  
University Press of New England,  
1997.

## Museum Exhibitions

- Bezalel Museum, Jerusalem - 1963.  
Tel Aviv Museum - 1963.  
Brockton Art Center,  
Fuller Memorial - 1969.  
Bronfman Center, Montreal - 1970.  
Rose Museum, Brandeis, Waltham,  
Massachusetts - 1976.  
Heidelberg Museum - 1977.  
Kunstverein Esslingen - 1977.  
Germanisches National Museum,  
Nuremberg - 1977.  
Kunstmuseum, Dusseldorf - 1978.  
Rheinisches Landesmuseum,  
Bonn - 1978.  
University of Haifa, Israel - 1978.  
Museum Der Stadt, Landau - 1979.  
Kunstmuseum, Wiesbaden - 1979.  
Kunstverein Braunschweig - 1980.  
Traveling Exhibition organized by  
Ministry of Culture and Education -  
visited 30 cultural centers in Israel -  
1980-85.  
Stadtgalerie Bamberg,  
Villa Dessauer - 1988.
- "The Past Continues - Two Decades"  
Koffler Gallery, Toronto Ontario  
- 1990.  
"The Past Continues" Temple Judea  
Museum, Philadelphia - 1991.  
"Bak and Dürer" Dürer Museum,  
Nuremberg - 1991.  
"Samuel Bak - Landschaften Jüdischer  
Erfahrung" Jüdisches Museum,  
Stadt Frankfurt am Main - 1993.  
"FLIGHT: Escape, Hope, Redemption"  
Hebrew Union College - Jewish  
Institute of Religion, New York,  
New York - 1994.  
"Samuel Bak- A Retrospective Journey:  
Paintings 1946-1994" Janice Charach  
Epstein Museum/Gallery,  
West Bloomfield, MI - 1994.  
"Myth, Midrash and Mysticism"  
Spernas Museum, Chicago, IL - 1995.  
"Myth, Midrash, and Mysticism"  
Mizel Museum of Judaica,  
Denver, Colorado - 1995.
- "Landscapes of Jewish Experience"  
Wilshire Boulevard Temple,  
Los Angeles, California - 1995.  
"Myth, Midrash, and Mysticism"  
The National Catholic Center  
For Holocaust Education,  
Seton Hill College, Greensburg,  
Pennsylvania - 1995.  
"Myth, Midrash, and Mysticism"  
Rosen Museum Gallery,  
Boca Raton, Florida - 1996.  
"The Landscape of Jewish Experience"  
Holocaust Museum Houston  
and B'Nai B'Rith Klutznick National  
Jewish Museum, Washington,  
D.C. - 1997.  
"Angels From Elsewhere"  
Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter,  
New Hampshire - 1997.  
Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove,  
PA - 1998.  
Panorama Museum, Bad Frankenhausen,  
Germany - 1998.

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<http://mproductions.com/packer/catalogues.htm>

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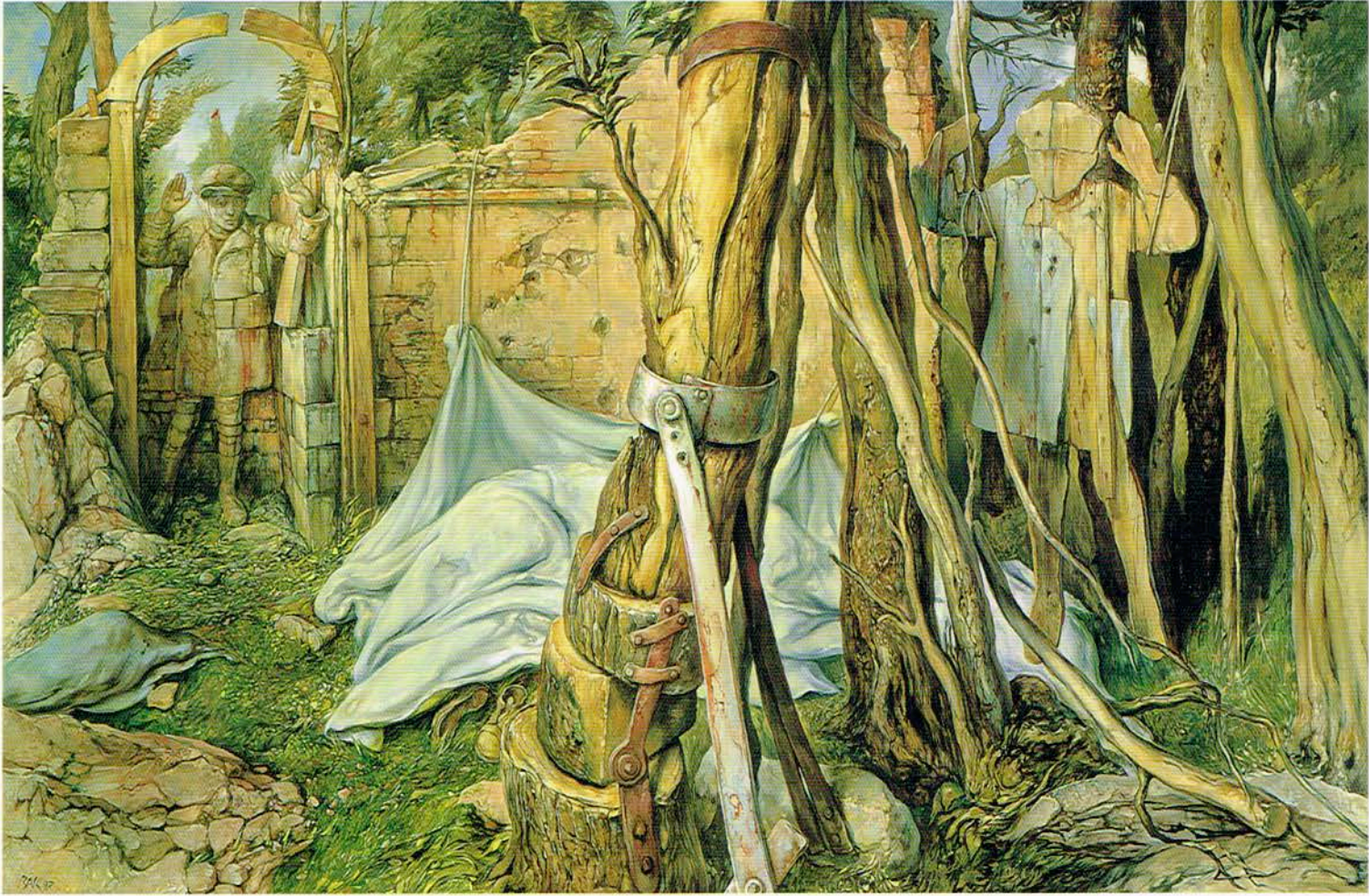
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# SAMUEL BAK

In the Presence of Figures



17 OCTOBER – 30 NOVEMBER, 1998

OPENING RECEPTION  
Saturday 17 October, 1998  
3–6 pm  
The artist will be present  
The public is invited to attend

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