THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTIC STYLE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN & COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

AND

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

FACULTY OF FINE ART

DEPARTMENT OF PAINTING

BY

RACHEL KERR

APRIL 1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

During the 1940's and 1950's, a group of New York artists, now known as Abstract Expressionists, emerged. Most of these artists had already begun their careers in the preceeding decade; the time of the Great Depression and the outbreak of the Second World War.

This group of artists, which included such diverse names as Arsile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, Robert Motherwell, and William Baziotes joined forces because of their esthetic beliefs. [1]

Though these artists shared the same preoccupations, each developed an individual style.

Adolph Gottlieb, like his colleagues, was both part of and apart from Abstract Expressionism. Although he shared their common goal, he pursued and arrived at his own personal style.

From the beginning of his career Gottlieb strived towards the portrayal of 'emotional Truth' or 'experienced feelings'. He agreed with Clement

Greenberg that -

> 'Art is a matter strictly of experience...and what counts first and last in art is quality.' 2

But he ventured further in stating that -

> 'Paint quality is meaningless if it does not express quality of feeling.' 3

In his quest towards the portrayal of 'inner experience', Gottlieb freely used and compromised different styles and ideas and developed several mature styles before his death in 1974.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Appendix for outline of their beliefs.

2. Clement Greenberg, "Abstract, Representational, and so forth", Art and Culture, Beacon Press, Boston, 1961, p.133.

3. Adolph Gottlieb, "New York Exhibitions", MKR Art Outlook, No. 6 Dec 1945, New York, p.4.

CHAPTER ONE — EARLY WORK AND INFLUENCES

It was in 1921, at the age of eighteen, under the auspices of Robert Henri at the Art Students League, that Gottlieb began building a solid foundation for his future as an artist. It was Henri's non-academic approach that appealed to Gottlieb and other young artists. Obviously, a perceptive and good teacher, Henri encouraged his pupils to paint directly onto the canvas instead of working from preliminary sketches. This advice left its imprint on Gottlieb's work throughout his whole career. Working directly onto the canvas seemed to suit Gottlieb's objectives perfectly, enabling him to retain a freshness of expression in all his work.

1921 seemed to have been a milestone in the life of Gottlieb. Not only was he influenced greatly by the advice and encouragement of Henri, but this, also, was the year he enrolled in an illustration course with John Sloan. It was Sloan, a leading artist in The Eight,[1] who encouraged his pupils to pursue individual directions in their art. However, before narrowing their horizons, their choice of direction, he told students to study the masters, their techniques, their ideas, their problems, and hence to clarify for themselves the reasons for being artists themselves.

Gottlieb took Sloan's advice seriously and in 1921, he embarked on a journey through Europe to see, at firsthand, art which was unavailable in New York.

In 1922, he returned and in 1923 took a Teacher Training Program at the Parson's School of Design graduating the next year, to enter another of Sloan's classes; a painting class at the League where he seriously began painting. It was here that Gottlieb probably did his earliest known paintings Portrait, circa 1923 (pl.1), a beautifully simple portrait executed in dark resonant tones, still in its composition, and Nude Model, c. 1923 (pl.2), a curiously out of proportion nude executed in the same way as Portrait. It is in the dark palette and painterly technique of these paintings that the influence of Sloan's realism can be seen.

> 'In Portrait Gottlieb echoes Sloan's deep colour range in his resonant tones of browns and greens. He also uses a traditional method of under-painting learned from Sloan, layering light and dark shades on a middle-toned ground to achieve a sense of sculptural volume in the model's head and shoulders.' [2]

Sloan, because he too had studied under Henri, also believed in painting directly onto the canvas, and broadly massing forms with colours. Gottlieb, in all his figure studies, for example, Portrait used this technique of calling upon his memory or conception of the models forms.

Gottlieb appreciated Sloan's open-minded attitude towards European art. Though Sloan did not adopt these styles himself, he introduced his students to them and allowed them to choose for themselves whether or not Cubism, for example, was a viable means of expression in itself, or whether it served only as a learning device. For Gottlieb, personally, Cubism was an important means of expression.

In 1924 Gottlieb graduated from Sloan's class and soon began painting on his own. The continuing influence of Sloan can be seen in the works of this time. Still Life-Gate Leg Table, 1925 (pl.3), for example, contrasts dissimilar textures of wood, cloth and metal in muted tones of browns, ivory and ochres. By 1927 Gottlieb felt the need for a more lively colour palette and so, in Grand Concourse , c.1927 (pl. 4), he enlivened his palette, painting the city street in soft pale shades of lavender, purple and blue, with browns accented by brighter pink reds to be seen in the tiled roofs.

Green tones are to be found in the grass in the foreground. These green tones are somewhat overshadowed by the stark white building in the background. Altogether Gottlieb's palette, at this time, seems brighter, less sombre. leaning towards a chalky look.

By the late twenties, Gottlieb felt dissatisfied with the restricted style he had acquired through Sloan. He began to search for a more imaginative style. Since his trip to Europe in 1921, Gottlieb had come to feel that American Realist painting of the time was too provincal. Looking for alternatives, Gottlieb was affected not so much by Cubism but by the work of Cezanne, which offered a subjective approach to perception while not sacrificing representation.

It was Cezanne's portraiture more than anything else which influenced Gottlieb at this time. In Interior(Self-Portrait) c 1927 (pl. 5), the whole introspective mood of the painting seems to reflect that found in Cezanne's portraits. Not only the mood but the compositional elements seem to bear a resemblance to the portraits of Cezanne. In Still Life With Basket, 1888-90 (pl. 6), there is a spatial ambiguity created by presenting different angles of the objects at the same time. The urn, for example, is conveyed from a high viewpoint yet the other adjacent

objects are presented at eye level. Also disconcerting, is the portrayal of the objects which are suposedly on the same plane. Some fruits are conveyed as flat objects while other fruits are portrayed three dimensionally. These elements are all reflected in Interior (Self-Portrait), in which objects on the one plane fluctuate between two dimensional and three dimensional interpretations.

A re-affirmation of the influence Cezanne's work had on the work of Gottlieb was told by Aaron Siskind, a close friend of Gottlieb who said

> 'When we were in school
> Gottlieb's God was Cezanne.' [3]

In 1929, Gottlieb met Milton Avery. The next year, in May 1930, Gottlieb had his first one-man show at the Dudensing Gallery New York. South Ferry Waiting Room c 1929, Brooklyn Bridge c 1930 (pl.7) and The Wasteland c 1930 (pl.9) were all exhibited and were all expressionistic in style. These paintings, executed at the beginning of the Depression, all reflect a mood of tension and uncertainty. As in the paintings of the twenties, a muted palette is still evident in these works.

Brooklyn Bridge is very much in the same vein as Sloan's genre paintings of New York like The City From Greenwich Village, 1922(pl. 8). However, there is a vital difference between both artist's response to the city. Sloan treats the viewer to an over-all panoramic view of the bridge and city. Gottlieb, on the other hand, adopts the Brooklyn Bridge as an emblem of the city. The bridge, instead of being a gateway into a vital city, is a barrier before a ghostly metropolis. The figures in the painting are all alienated from each other, faceless strangers all trapped in their own little worlds, so reminiscent of Munch's paintings conveying the feeling of isolation and despair.

It is through the paintings of this time that the influence of Avery is revealed. In The Wasteland, for example, the simplified forms outlined by dark thick contour lines reflect Milton Avery's technique.

> 'Like Avery, he also contrasts painted and incised lines and brushes up to the edges of forms, surrounding them with shadows that do not create a sense of depth as much as reverberation. This haloing technique which Gottlieb first employed in his expressionistic works of the early thirties, reappears later in abstract form in the auras around discs in the Bursts.' [4]

In attempting to clarify what exact influences Avery had upon Gottlieb, it must be remembered that the influences were fourfold. Not only did the work of Avery impress him but also the man's attitude itself. Avery's treatment of the figure but also of landscape greatly impressed Gottlieb.

It was during the thirties that Gottlieb was exposed to Avery's method of working and thinking and it is during this period that such influence is most evident.

It was under the influence of Avery that Gottlieb learnt that the subjects closest to him-himself, his family and friends, were suitable themes for his work. It was during the time of his close association with Avery that he took a special interest in portraiture executing such paintings as Esther 1931 (pl. 10) portrait of his wife, Untitled (Portrait of Emil)c 1934 and Untitled (Max Margolis)c 1935 (pl. 11).

Esther, 1931, again is similar in style to that of Avery; the dark outlines and distortion of the figure. This distortion lends a subjective quality to the painting. The feeling evoked from the painting is one of serenity and warmth; precisely that which is conveyed in Avery's Mrs Avery in a Checked Jacket, 1939 (pl. 12).

In other figurative work of this period such as Seated Nude, 1934 (pl.13) Gottlieb alters the figure's porportions. The head of the woman seems to be too small for the size of her body, which is rather triangular in shape. This distortion or exaggeration of human forms can be seen in all Avery's figurative work.

Figure painting during the thirties was considered by the majority of American artists seeking a personal style, to be deviod of literary or social content. The Depression brought about the urge to create art which said something about the feelings of disquiet and despair of the time. Avery, among very few others was able to find a fresh approach to painting the figure. His flattened figures and landscapes of interwoven patterns reveal his grasp of Matisse's direct use of colour, and treatment of the figure and landscape as flat patterns with rhythmic contours. His ability to eliminate detail and to organise masses of flat areas of pure colour was what impressed young artists like Gottlieb and his friend Rothko.

Avery's work became a model of subtle, close-valued colour.

It was in the Avery household that discussions about art revolved around the notion that a painting should be flat and have an overall pattern instead of illusionistic depth.

> '(Avery)He championed simplified precisely delineated forms and flattened colour masses when few were willing to listen. Perhaps his greatest legacy was his ability to abstract the mood of a place or situation with colour.' [5]

During the thirties, these places were Gloucester, Massechusetts, and Southern Vermont. When the Depression hit, the Avery's were able to spend their summers in these places where they were frequently visited by Gottlieb and Mark Rothko.

It was in Gloucester that Gottlieb sketched and painted many of the same scenes as Avery. For example, Untitled(Gloucester Harbour Fisheries) c 1933 (pl.14) was a painting of the small town's fisheries which Avery had painted the year before entitled Harbour at Night, 1932 (pl.15).

Not only in landscape but in figurative work they painted on parallel lines. As Gottlieb recalled : -

> ' While he was painting a lot of portraits of his wife, I painted my wife. We'd paint scenes of Gloucester Harbour. I got into the habit of working the way he did, but that was sort of natural for me because I had always worked from sketches. We'd go out and make sketches of Gloucester Harbour or people on the beach and then go home and paint them.'6

Avery, the man himself, had a strong impact on Gottlieb. At a time when the choice in American art was either narrative or political, Avery singlemindedly remained true to his own personal vision, contrary to these prevailing styles. As Gottlieb relates -

> 'I have always thought he was a great artist. When Social Realism and the American scene were considered the important thing, he took an esthetic stand opposed to regional subject matter. I shared his point of view and since he was ten years my senior and an artist I respected, his attitude helped to reinforce me in my chosen direction. I have always regarded him as a brilliant

colourist and draftsman, a
solitary figure.... working
against the stream.'7

This esthetic stand allowed Avery to continue painting what was dear to him-himself, his family, his friends, and his surrounding landscape. His paintings remained soft lyrical, often humourous, expressions of his surrounding environment. The effects of the Depression; the acute, widespread, social unrest, appears in none of his work.

Gottlieb, however, could not ignore the social unrest and felt compelled to portray these elements in his work. Hence, the search for an alternative to the style he had developed under Avery.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Eight, who became known as the Ash Can School, because of their humble subjects were a group of American artists who were the first to aim programmatically at founding a native style consonant with the American experience. The Eight treated themes new to American Art - the shabby neighbourhoods and seamy life of the urban lower classes, while challenging the stuffy discipline of the Academy.

2. Lawrence Alloway, Mary Davis Naughton, Adolph Gottlieb: A Retrospective, The Arts Publisher, Inc., New York, 1981, p.13.

3. Alfred H. Barr, Jr, Cezanne, Gauguin, Sevrat, Van Gogh,New York Museum of Modern Art, 1929, p.23.

4. Alloway and Naughton, Adolph Gottlieb: A Retrospective, p.16.

5. Barbara Haskell, Milton Avery, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1982, p.56.

6. Miriam Roberts, Adolph Gottlieb Paintings 1921 - 1956,exhibition catalogue Omaaha, Nebr, Joslyn Art Museum 1980, p.8.

7. Charlotte Willard, "In the Art Galleries", New York Post, Jan 10, 1965, p.20.

CHAPTER TWO - ARIZONA, SURREALISM, PRIMITIUISM AND THE WORK WHICH DEVELOPED FROM THESE ELEMENTS.

Gottlieb's Winter and Spring of 1937 - 38 was spent in Arizona with his wife. This total change of environment had just the right effect on Gottlieb's work. The sudden starkness of the desert landscape, so different from the lush vegatation of Vermont demanded a change in Gottlieb. As he said himself -

> 'I think the emotional feeling
> I had on the desert was that it
> was like being at sea.' 1

The first paintings executed in Arizona were desert landscapes. Gottlieb was dissatisfied with the resultant work. He then attempted painting from sketches he had done in Vermont, but felt the disparateness of the subject alien to his feelings. He began painting still life arrangements using chess pieces, combined with fruits of the desert. These still life paintings echo the influence of Avery in the flattening of the representational elements, and the emphasis on the spaces between the forms, so that the shadows and background have as much presence as the subject itself. Gottlieb goes

further and creates paintings which convey ambiguous spatial dimensions, reflecting the continuing influence of Cezanne. This ambiguous space is achieved by contrasting plane with volume. He flattens forms into semi-geometric shapes, suggests volume in the shadows of these forms, yet gives the forms no sense of dimension in themselves and paints the shadows as flat shapes.

The creation of these ambivalent spatial or improbable compositions echo Gottlieb's own experience of the desert where one can see as far as the horizon in a full circle, giving the sensation of being at sea, in an ocean of sand. This sensation, which Gottlieb had never experienced before seemed to force its way into his still-lifes of this time. There is a definite 'surreal' feeling conveyed in these paintings; form the muted tones echoing the colour of the desert scape to the open, ambiguous space rendered in his work of this time.

Symbols and the Desert, 1938 (pl.16), for example, has very strong surreal undertones. The title, the subject matter, the dreamlike rendering of the subject, the compositional elements all point to surreal influences, which were obviously acclerated by his stay in the Arizona Desert.

Since he had seen Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism, an exhibition of Verist and Abstract surrealism at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York in 1936, Gottlieb showed an interest in surrealism. This interest is surrealism was accelerated by his stay in the Arizona desert where the environment seemed unreal and dreamlike, where one could see for miles and at the same time could focus on nearby objects.

Gottlieb, having seen an exhibition of the work of Giorgio De Chirico entitled De Chirico Paintings and Goaches, Oct 29 - Nov 17, 1936 at the Pierre Malisse Gallery, N.Y. and the work of Dali in the same year, reflected in his work the influence of these artists.

Symbols and the Desert, 1938, for example, portrays a sense of timelessness. This feeling of stopped time is an important characteristic of Dali's work. This painting echoes Dali's contrast of emotionally charged imagery with a neutral setting. Gottlieb, beacuse of his preference for painterly edges, which he had developed under Sloan and Avery, never adopted Dali's trompe l'oeil style. Rather, from Surrealism, he took a more symbolic approach to subject matter. This can be seen in his choice of title and method of conveying the subject

matter. Rather than paint a desert landscape, Gottlieb presents a still life in which he uses fragments of desert life set against an actual desert-scape. He focuses on the detritus of the arid land-petrified wood, dried cacti and parched bones to evoke a sense of the timelessness of the desert.

In New York, Gottlieb continued to paint still lifes. He composed beach still lifes which he placed in boxes of his own construction. These paintings convey a somewhat metaphysical quality; fragments dragged up from the ocean floor suggest elements dragged up from the depths of one's own unconscious, the ultimate reality. There is the feeling of a searching for the nature of true being, of the nature and essence of things. The compartmentalized areas of the boxes within the composition of a bleak landscape are reminiscent of the conscious mind; the bracketing faculty of the brain. Yet this is portrayed within a bleak lifeless landscape, suggesting that the conscious mind is limited by the preconceived notion of what is reality. In other words, the information which is accessible to the conscious mind is not the whole truth and therefore is like a barren landscape.

In 1939 - 40, the reality of war was brought home with the arrival of the surrealists in New York. Forced to flee from Europe Dali, Breton, Matta and many others had to live in exile in America. Their presence in New York brought surrealism to the forefront of the art world and enabled Gottlieb to study their ideas and techniques more closely.

The aim of the Surrealists was to overcome the barriers between the conscious and unconsious mind, the real and unreal worlds of waking and dreaming. To achieve this, the Surrealists had to escape the control of reason and all preconception. In attempting to express the activities of the unconscious mind, the Surrealists took two different directions. The first was towards complete fantasy and absurdity which took the form of found objects. The second towards highly detailed and realistic paintings of objects placed in strange juxtapositions. For example, the flawless rendering and high degree of verisimilitude of Salvador Dali's tree with limp watches drooping over their branches, or Giorgio De Chirico's deserted and classical-looking streets with long arcaded perspectives and a lone statue or a bunch of banana's in the foreground.

To free their minds from all control exerted by reason and all aesthetic or moral preoccupations, pure psyhic automatism was employed, which was encouraged by the Surrealists interest in Freud, the father of psychology who discovered that man was dominated by powerful unconscious forces which he may be able to redirect but not control.

The idealogy of the Surrealists and their techniques greatly interested Gottlieb. By the time he painted Untitled (Box and Sea Objects), 1940, (pl.17) the motif of the box in a bleak landscape was not unusual in his work. The box in this painting serves as a coffin-like container in which there are placed sea objects - shells, seaweed, and drift wood. But also included is what looks like a dead bird-like creature. The contrast of strange shapes among related, familar objects creates a mysterious, jarring effect on the onlooker. One feels this landscape, whether it exists in reality or in the mind is one of timeless stillness. The Box and Sea Objects, in this sense, is similar to the work of Rene Magritte, who, like Dali uses a precise academic technique to give an air of verisimilitude to what is essentially subjective. Magritte's, The Reckless Sleeper, 1927 (pl.18) is a seemingly neutral portrayal of a sleeping figure in a strange box and a

group of familar objects embedded in a slab of what appears to be lead, seen against a night sky. Magritte, in this painting takes images from everyday life as his starting point as did Gottlieb in Box and Sea Objects.

Gottlieb, in the search of his own personal style took from other styles what was relevant to himself. At this stage in his development, the influence of De Chirico can be seen in Picnic(Box and Figures), 1939 (pl.19) in which Gottlieb employed mannikin figures derived directly form De Chirico's work of 1915 - 17, such as The Duo, 1915 (pl.20). In this painting, Gottlieb creates an unreal space in which is placed a box which contains mannikin-like figures. In the background is echoed the Brooklyn Bridge motif which Gottlieb used as an emblem of the barriers, the restrictions of life.

Gottlieb however was not comfortable with the illusionism of Dali, De Chirico and other Surrealists. Their lack of interest in painterly qualities was alien to him and he came to feel that Surrealism was not the answer for him.

He relates -

> 'I didn't feel that Surrealism was really an answer, a complete answer to what I was looking for.' 2

In the work of the late thirties and early forties, the strange, almost magical realist paintings seem to be myth-laden and full of psychological notions encouraged by John Graham.

Graham, who was part of the European avant-garde and who had lived in Paris, knew prominent writers such as Andre Breton and Andre Gide. Through his journeys to Europe and his copies of Cahiers d'Art, Graham opened up new horizons for Gottlieb.

He encouraged Gottlieb to use both Surrealism and Cubism in his development. He actually fused ideas from both traditions in Systems and Dialectics. [3] This approach encouraged Gottlieb to use relevant elements of different styles.

Not only through Surrealism did Gottlieb learn of Freud and his theories, but also through Graham who introduced him to Jungian ideas also.

Again, Graham freely combines the ideas of both men within his book, Systems and Dialectics.

Perhaps the greatest inheritence from Graham was the belief in the unconscious expression to be found in primitive art. Graham, a connoisseur of African sculpture, encouraged and advised Gottlieb in his collection of primitive artworks.

By 1941, Gottlieb had come to the realisation that Surrealism alone could not provide a solution to his personal concerns. He was searching for an art form which would express his own feelings and thoughts which he knew were shared by others. What he strived towards was an art which was individual, yet universal. For Gottlieb, and indeed many American artists, Primitivism, taken in a very broad sense seemed to help in providing an answer to the burning question:

> 'What basis could be found for a new art that was neither derivative nor provincal. That was individual yet universal, free from cant and cannon, yet absolute?'. [4]

By Primitivism, I mean a form of Primitivism that incorporated a broad range of imagery, and titles that evoked the origins, the core of natural and human history, rather than an imagery of specific, tribal art such as that of African peoples. The reasons for using this form of primitivism was related to the idea that the prime purpose of modern art should be the exploration of the unconscious, in order to revivify contact with the primordial racial past. This theory, espoused by John Graham, held that artists should work towards -

> 'The production of new authentic values by delving into the memories of the immemorial past and expressing them in pure form.' 5

This concept was a Jungian concept rather than a Freudian one. The concept of a collective unconscious, a belief in innate racial memory that made the contemporary unconscious a repository of form-symbols dating from earliest human experience.

The first attempts at reconciling these different concerns - Abstraction, and the major themes of Surrealism - Biomorphism, Automatism, Primitivism and Myth can be called his 'Pictograph' period.

For a work to be a Pictograph the imagery must be significative and the whole compartmentalized. In adopting the term pictograph Gottlieb was referring to archaic wall art whose meaning is lost to modern man. Gottlieb had seen pictographs in 1937 at The Museum of Modern Art in Prehistoric Rock Pictures of Europe and Africa in 1938 in Arizona and again in 1941 in another show in New York American Indian Art. This last exhibition, which stressed the mystery of Pictographs made such an impact on Gottlieb that he decided to use the format of these ancient wall pictures. In his portrayal of these pictographs, he used a sand-toned palette and added paint skins to the surface to produce a time-worn effect.

By using the term pictograph, Gottlieb was freeing himself from accepted modes of painting and thus allowing himself freer self-expression. He says -

> 'I adopted the term Pictograph ... out of a feeling of disdain for the accepted notions of what a painting should be. This was in 1941. I decided that to acquiesce in the prevailing conception of what constituted 'good painting' meant the acceptance of an academic strait-jacket.

> It was therfore, necessary for
> me to utterly repudiate so-called
> 'good painting' in order to be
> free to express what was visually true 6
> for me.'

In what is considered his first pictograph, Eyes of Oedipus, 1941 (pl.21) Gottlieb, freed by the format of the pictograph, uses mythology to communicate his feelings at the time.

Gottlieb -

> 'In 1941 (it) started with some
> conversations that I had with Rothko
> in which I said ... that one of the
> ways to solve this problem ... is to
> find some sort of subject matter
> other than that which is around us.
> Because everyone was painting the
> American scene - Mark was painting
> people in subway stations ... I said,
> well, why not try to find a good
> subject matter like mythological
> themes? ... We agreed to do that ...
> and I played around with the Oedipus
> myth which was both a classical theme
> and a Freudian theme... Obviously
> we were not going to try to illustrate
> these themes in some sort of
> Renaissance style. We were exploring ..
> found there were formal problems that
> confronted us for which there was no
> precedent. We were in unknown territory.' 7

The myth referred to in Eyes of Oedipus is the myth of the King, Thebes who blinds himself after he discovers he has killed his father and married his mother.

The myth, for Gottlieb, with its themes of incest and patricide, was a compelling expression of man's basic savagery.

The painting itself consists of a single ground, milk chocolate in colour, divided by lines which divide the composition into compartments. Within these sections are sign-like pictorial elements. Eyes, eyes and nose and hand forms are repeated in different sections.

Agreeing with his friend, John Graham, that primitive art is closely allied with the unconscious, Gottlieb used these primitivistic images as clues, directing the viewer to the unconscious communication he hoped his pictographs would convey. Eyes, in Eyes of Oedipus, point to the limitations of eyesight to internal vision and indicate the moving from a record of the external world to an evocation of an internal one. They are a representation of the bridge between inner and outer reality and so, point to the content of the painting, the unconscious rather than the evocation of an ancient myth.

Gottlieb, in his pictographs intended to create an atmosphere conducive to a sort of meditation wherein the viewer could catch a glimpse of the undiscovered within himself. The use of the pictograph enabled Gottlieb to use mythological imagery without spatial illusion and in doing this, created a simulated language system which freed him from conventional methods of using mythology.

Gottlieb - 'When I say I am searching for a totality of vision, I mean that I take things I know - hand, nose, arm - and use them in my paintings after seperating them from their associations as anatomy. I use them as a primitive method and a primitive necessity of expressing, without learning how to do so by conventional ways. It puts us at the beginning of seeing.' 8

In the pictographs there are two different kinds of composition. The first, as in Eyes of Oedipus, has an all-over grid design, while Peresphone, 1942 (pl.22), for example, uses a centralized format.

Surrealist biomorphism was the most important source for Gottlieb's centralized compositions. It was through the Surrealist and Graham that

Gottlieb arrived at biomorphism via automatism.. He said his method of painting the Pictographs was 'akin to the automatic writing of the Surrealists.' [9] According to Graham, automatism was a direct means of expressing feelings -

> 'Gesture, like voice, reflects different emotions... The hand-writing must be authentic, and not faked... (not) conscientious but honest and free.' [10]

Biomorphic images emerged from the technique of automatism. Peresphone, 1942 is a pictograph consisting of a centralized biomorphic image, which evokes the myth of the abduction of Peresphone to the underworld. Through cavities and never-ending dark corridors where fear and terror reign Peresphone has to travel until she reaches her destination where there is no fear and it no longer seems dark. The myth serves as a parallel to Gottlieb's own career; the symbolic arrival at the pictographs wherein lies the means of expressing the deeper feelings of the masses. It was at this time that Gottlieb reached a clarity of vision.

In 1943, in a letter to Edward Alden Jewell, Art Editor of the New York Times, Gottlieb and Rothko outline their esthetic beliefs : -

1. 'To us art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take risks.

2. This world of the imagination is fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense.

3. It is our function as artists to make the spectator see the world our way - not his way.

4. We favour the simple expression of the complex thought. We are for the large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to re-assert the picture plane. We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth.

5. It is a widely accepted notion among painters that it does not matter what one paints as long as it is well painted. This is the essence of academicism. There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless. That is why we profess spiritual kinship with primitive and archaic art.' [11]

In this statement, Gottlieb and Rothko publicly announce their belief in subject matter and two-dimensional space, and their fascination with myth and primitive art. Through this statement the influence of John Graham can again be seen. First, their emphasis on art as 'an adventure into the unknown world' echoes Graham's belief that the purpose of art in particular is to re-establish lost contact with the unconscious. Second, their statement that the world of the imagination is fancy free and violently opposed to common sense' parallels Graham's idea that the imagination operates 'irrespective of reality'. Third, their advocacy of the 'simple expression of the complex thought' recalls Graham's conviction that artists should transpose observed phenomena into simple, clearer terms. Their desire to 'reassert the picture plane' echoes Graham's idea that a painter abstracts three-dimensional phenomena on a two-dimensional plane. The last point reasserts their belief in subject matter and their interest in myth and primitive art.

During the Second World War, 1939 - 45, Gottlieb gradually turned away from mythical themes. Through his pictographs of this time, he suggested the unconscious, which was his main preoccupation, in terms of the journey, the sea and the night, through primitive themes.

By 1948, he had begun experimenting with a new kind of composition. This he achieved by decomposing the grid and scattering its pieces and images over the canvas. Figurations of Clangor, 1951 (pl.23), is an example of this scattering of the imagery. The painting is one of a larger and more graphic grid than previous pictographs. Within the composition are both symbolic and abstract shapes. The enlarging of the signs or shapes and the reduction in their number serves to dramatise and intensify Gottlieb's fascination with the free-association of subjective images. Figurations of Clangor, one of the last in Gottlieb's pictograph period is a painting of dramatic contrasting colours. Still black is contrasted with vibrant yellow, offset by minor glazes of white and isolated touches of red and blue.

At this time, the pictographs tend to be either paintings of dramatic contrasting colours like Figurations of Clangor or ones of softer colour harmonies like Labyrinth # 2 1950 (pl.24). In this work, so reminiscent of Klee, pale green, almost turquoise is harmonized by lavender colours through which can be detected underlayers of darker colours. In this painting, figurative imagery is still evident within the now graphic grid.

In 1951, bored with ten years concentration and restraint, Gottlieb's work opened up flamboyantly into bigger scale and luxurious colour.

Unstill Life , 1952 (pl.25), is a perfect example of this. Large in scale, the form is centralized within a richly textured composition. Very evident in this work are the layers upon layers of subtle painting which demand closer examination by the viewer. The form itself, somewhere between a table top and a personnage is seen on a ground squeezed against the edges of the canvas.

It was in the late forties and early fifties that Gottlieb started to venture in new directions. In Unstill Life, 1952, for example, 'pictographic' sections now rounded were incorporated within a bulky, central image. In Figurations of Clangor, 1951, Gottlieb abridged the symbols into almost abstract signs - arrows, rectangles, circular shapes - shorn of nearly all literal interpretations.

Gottlieb, by this time had come to realise that even the most ambiguous primitivistic images in the pictographs had become too familar to create ambiguity, mystery and intimations of universality.

Thus, in 1952 he embarked on a series of paintings known as 'Imaginary Landscapes'.

FOOTNOTES

1. Gottlieb, in interview with Martin Friedman, Interview with Adolph Gottlieb, Tape 1B, p. 14.

2. John Jones, Interview with Adolph Gottlieb, 1965, Archives of American Art, p. 7.

3. John Graham, Systems and Dialectics of Art, Delphic Studios, New York, 1937. Inscribed 'To Esther and Adolphe, Graham.'

4. William Rubin, Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1984, p. 615.

5. Ibid

6. Gottlieb, The New Decade, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1955, pp 35-36.

7. Gottlieb, quoted from interview with Andrew Hudson, 1968 in Karen Wilkin, "Adolph Gottlieb: The Pictographs," Art International, 21 Dec, 1977, p. 28.

8. Gottlieb, "New York Exhibitions," MKR Art Outlook, No 6, Dec 1945, p. 4.

9. Jones, Interview with Adolph Gottlieb, p. 1.

10. Graham, Systems and Dialectics of Art, p. 88.

11. Adolph and Mark Rothko, in a letter to Alden Jewell, Art Editor, New York Times, Jun 7, 1943. See appendix for full letter.

CHAPTER THREE — THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTIC STYLE

Gottlieb continued to improvise pictographs unitl 1952 when he realised their limitations in expressing his feelings to a receptive audience. He felt that -

> 'The more meanings and nuances... the greater its appeal and survival value. As with other works of art, the more general and universal its range of significance the better.' [1]

He agreed with Rothko that the 'simple expression of the complex thought' was the solution to the problem. And so, Gottlieb proceeded to simplify his images even more, arriving at paintings like The Frozen Sounds, # 2, 1952 (pl.26). This painting, one of his so-called imaginery landscapes, could be called a symbolist geography. It is divided horizontally into a dense 'earth' area under a white 'sky' area. The earth area is composed of the painterly qualities to be found in work such as Unstill Life. The upper or sky area consists of a textured white ground, through which other colours can be discerned, upon which floats rounded and oblong planes of colour, suggestive of moons, suns, stars, clouds.

In these paintings, a significant change in colour can be discerned. The colours favoured are reds and blacks on white grounds. This use of colour gives a ready, man-made look to the work and serves to add a tension to the work by conflicting with the natural reference to landscape.

Also in the early fifties the Abstract Expressionists, in which Gottlieb was grouped, broke into two clearly difined camps, which can be called chromatic or colour-field abstraction and gestural abstraction.

The colour-field abstractionists began to explore the expressive possiblities of colour, painting fields of chromatic expanses which saturate the eye. To maximise the visual impact of colour, they eliminated figurative symbolic images, simplified drawing and gesture, suppressed the contract of light and dark values and enlarged the size of their canvases. The result is paintings which constitute fields of colour that are open and that seem to continue indefinitely beyond the canvas limits. Perhaps the best summary of colour-field abstraction and its effects was Meyer Shapiro's; he called it 'an absolute in which the receptive viewer can lose himself... in an all-pervading... sensation of a dominant colour. ' [2]

Gestural abstractionists, on the other hand, believed that if they allowed what Kandinsky called 'inner necessity' to dictate the direct and unpremeditated process of painting, the resultant images would embody their felt, creative experiences. The principal means of expression was an entirely automatic script which resulted from the movement of the hand or boby and created a sort of plastic representation of a dramatic or emotional state.

Gottlieb, along with his friend, Rothko was included in the former group. He became primarily interested in focusing a simple, central image within a barely inflected colour field. Gottlieb, though grouped with the chromatic abstractionists was, I feel, also concerned with gestural abstraction. He attempted, at this stage in his work, to reconcile the two concerns.

The Couple, 1955 (pl.27), for example, is closer to gestural abstraction than chromatic abstraction. The surface, built up from layer upon layer of paint, is rich in colour and texture and more similar to Pollock than Rothko. The composition consists of a centralized image emphasised and monumentalized by broad, black brushstrokes which appear to be automatically executed and allowed to drip. At this stage in his development of an abstract style,

his work is more gestural in style and concerns than his later works.

He relates that -

> 'In 1955, as in the early forties, and before, I am still concerned with the problem of projecting images that seem to me to have meaning in terms of feeling. The important thing is to transfer the image to the canvas as it appears to me, without distortion. To modify the image would be falsify it, therefore I must accept it as it is. My criterion is the integrity of the projection.' 3

In saying this, Gottlieb is reaffirming his belief in automatism. By allowing his thoughts or hand to move randomly over the canvas, he, along with the gestural abstractionists, was attempting to free the subconscious so that buried images unavailable to the conscious mind could be generated onto the canvas. Automatism, they felt, freed painterly qualities and allowed the expression of universal themes.

From Midnight to Dawn, 1956 (pl.28) appears to be both gestural and chromatic. The sky area which consists of the upper one fifth of the composition is composed of black symbols or signs, rather calligraphic and hence, gestural. The remainder of the canvas consists of a blue field of colour, underneath which can be discerned other layers of colour and upon which is a single, centralized gestural black brushstroke.

Again there is a wedding of chromatic abstraction and gestural abstraction, combined with a simplification of imagery.

This simplification of imagery gradually led to what is called his 'Burst' series in 1957. These 'Burst' paintings are distillations of his 'imaginery landscapes', composed only of a 'sun' or 'moon' shape counterpoised above an 'earth' mass. Horizon lines are no longer in evidence, so the natural landscape is dismissed. Instead, the forms are so generalized that the paintings suggest a more cosmic content than landscape.

Positive, 1958 (pl.29), for example, is a dramatic painting; dramatic in the contrast between the hovering orb and the seething mass below. The forms, which are almost presented like icons are centralized on a neutral ground, seemingly devoid of expression. This treatment of the ground serves to hold the forms in space and to emphasis the stillness and frozen state of the images. The lower form is painted in a choppy, textured, gestural manner while the upper form is calmer, yet more intense and haloed by a field of biege.

The imagery of these 'Burst' paintings could be associated with the fire ball of the Atom bomb. Gottlieb was aware of this but stated that other interpretations should not be excluded; fire and earth, the solar and the tidal, sun and earth, male and female, night and day, life and death... Gottlieb continued to feel the necessity for open-ended, evocative imagery rather that specific, limited imagery.

The concept that predominates in the 'Burst' works in one of duality. These paintings appear to aim at and succeed in evoking a dual response; their dramatic qualities strike one immediately while the relationship between the images invite a slower reflection or digestion of the implications of these images.

Pink Smash, 1959 (pl.30) has a ground of a warm red hue upon which are his cosmic symbols; that of a celestial orb bleeding into the surrounding vibrant red hue above a dramatic mass of palest biege. In this painting there is a greater emphasis on the field of colour within which these elements hang. As Jane Harrison Cone says of these works -

> 'The absence or presence of colour acts as a kind of effulgent and curiously neutral ambience for the images.' [4]

During the 1960's, Gottlieb retained the basic format of the 'Bursts', but put them through different variations. In Apaquogue, 1961 (pl.31), for example, three solar discs hover over a large calligraphic area. Whereas, in Flotsam, 1968 (pl.32) the earth is spread into different coloured fragments, below four solar discs.

By the 1970's, the forms within the colour field were smaller in relation to the whole Gottlieb's increasing interest in colour is obvious. These works of the seventies, apart form his red and black ones, are varied and subtle in use of colour. Also evident is the looser treatment of the forms. Gone is the frozen, infertile state; instead, there is a feeling of fluctuation. The forms, as in Collision, 1971 (pl.33), seem to be moving in different directions. Gottlieb achieved this by occasionally turning the canvas so that the direction of the paint splatters is varied.

By the time Amorphous, 1973 (pl.34) was painted, Gottlieb's ever-increasing interest in colour as a form of expression is unquestionable. In this painting, the plane is one of atmospheric colour. However, the centralized image is still hovering or bleeding into this almost lyrical colour field. It is through this painting that we can conclude that

Gottlieb translated the ideas of both gesture painters and colour field painters into his own abstract symbolic style.

As Jane Harrison Cone says of his work -

> 'The Actual handling of colour recalls that of Rothko... in that it is laid down as a dissolving, scumbled haze, the very disparateness of the colour asserts not only their(the images) seperableness from the field but their image quality.' 5

Gottlieb's 'Burst' series distinguished him from his contemporaries in that he could not be boxed into one particular group. He used what was relevant to him from both groups, and arrived at a reconciliation of both concerns. Thus remaining true to his own vision; an art of symbolic content which conveyed his reality and hence the reality of the time.

Gottlieb -

'Certain people always say we should go back to nature. I notice they never say we should go forward to nature. It seems to me they are more concerned that we should go back, than about nature.
If the models we use are the apparitions seen in a dream, or the recollection of our prehistoric past, is this less part of nature or realism, than a cow in a field? I think not.
The role of the artist, of course, has always been that of image-maker.
Different times require different images.
Today when our aspirations have been reduced to a desperate attempt to escape from evil, and times are out of joint, our obsessive, subterranean and picto-graphic images are the expression of the neurosis which is our reality. To my mind certain so-called abstraction is not abstraction at all. On the contrary, it is the realism of our time.' 6

FOOTNOTES

1. I.M. Lewis, Social Anthropology in Perspective, Penguin Books, England, 1976, p. 128.

2. Irving H. Sandler, in an essay "Abstract Expressionism", Abstract Art Since 1945, foreward by Jean Leymarie, Thames and Hudson, London 1970, p. 58.

3. Gottlieb, The New Decade, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1955, p. 36.

4. Jane Harrison Cone, "Adolph Gottlieb", Art Forum, 6, No 8, April, 1968, p. 39.

5. Ibid.

6. Gottlieb, The Tiger's Eye, Vol 1, No 2, Dec 1947, p. 43.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between Gottlieb and the Abstract Expressionists is indicative of the whole group. He was both part of and apart from the group. The alliance that these artists formed consisted of such individuals as Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, William Baziotes, who came together to discuss their aims with each other.

The common goal, which unified these artists, was a dedication to a vital contemporary American art. But, most important they believed that this art should embody the personal experience of each artist.

In order to allow himself to concentrate on his aims, which were shared by the group, Gottlieb developed a unique approach to style. It was common practise for him to develop a style of painting based on the general range of ideas he wished to explore. After working with a particular style for a certain time, Gottlieb found that the ideas he was pursuing had become too refined in the process. At this point, he would develop a new style and continue in his exploration.

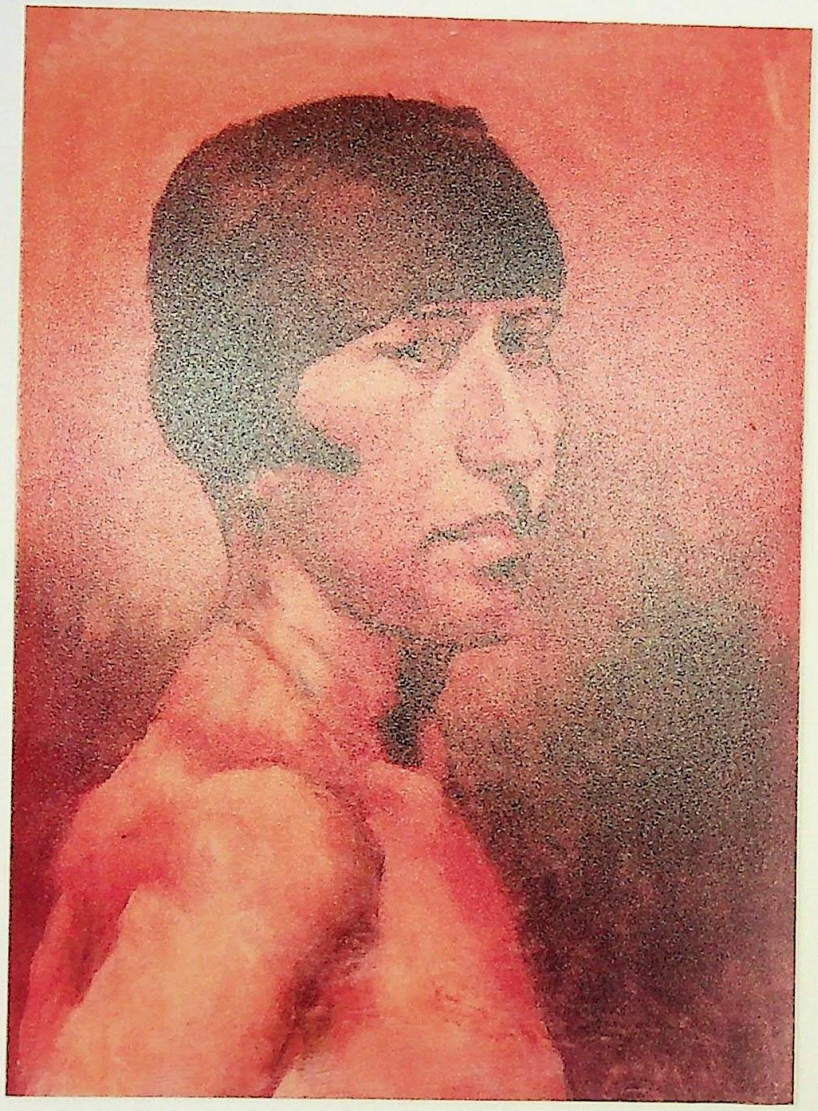
It was due to this approach that Gottlieb, in the development of what is called an Abstract Expressionistic Style, developed several mature styles - his 'pictographs', the 'imaginary landscapes' and his latest 'Burst' series.

For the last three years of his life, Gottlieb required assistants, due to a stroke which had immobilized him. These later works show no loss of personal touch. His esthetic and technical decisions were easily communicated to his assistants who acted upon his word.

In conclusion, it can be said that Gottlieb throughout his career remained true to his own ideals -

> 'His(the artists) values have to center around creativity and nothing else. Therefore, to paint well, to express one's own uniqueness, to express something of the uniqueness of one's own time, to relate to the great traditions of art, to communicate with a small but elite audience, these are the satisfactions of the artist.'

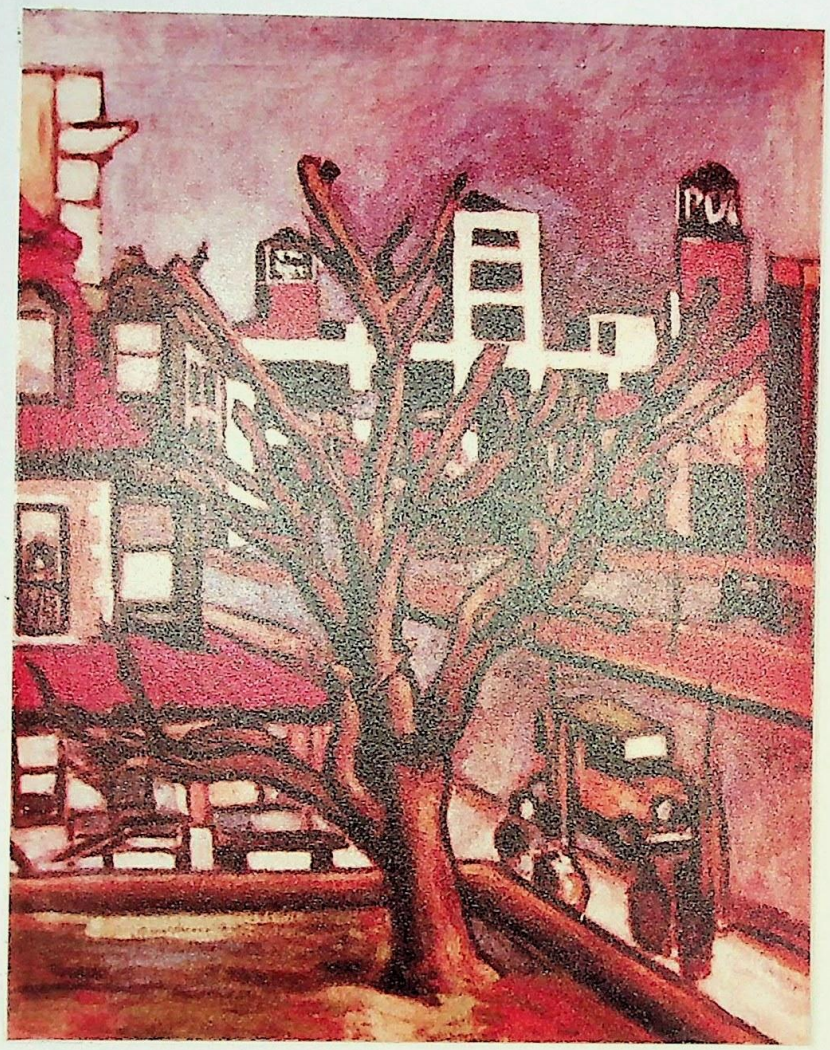
These ideals he delivered to a conference of the Pacific Art Association in April 1956 and it was these ideals he upheld until his death in 1974.



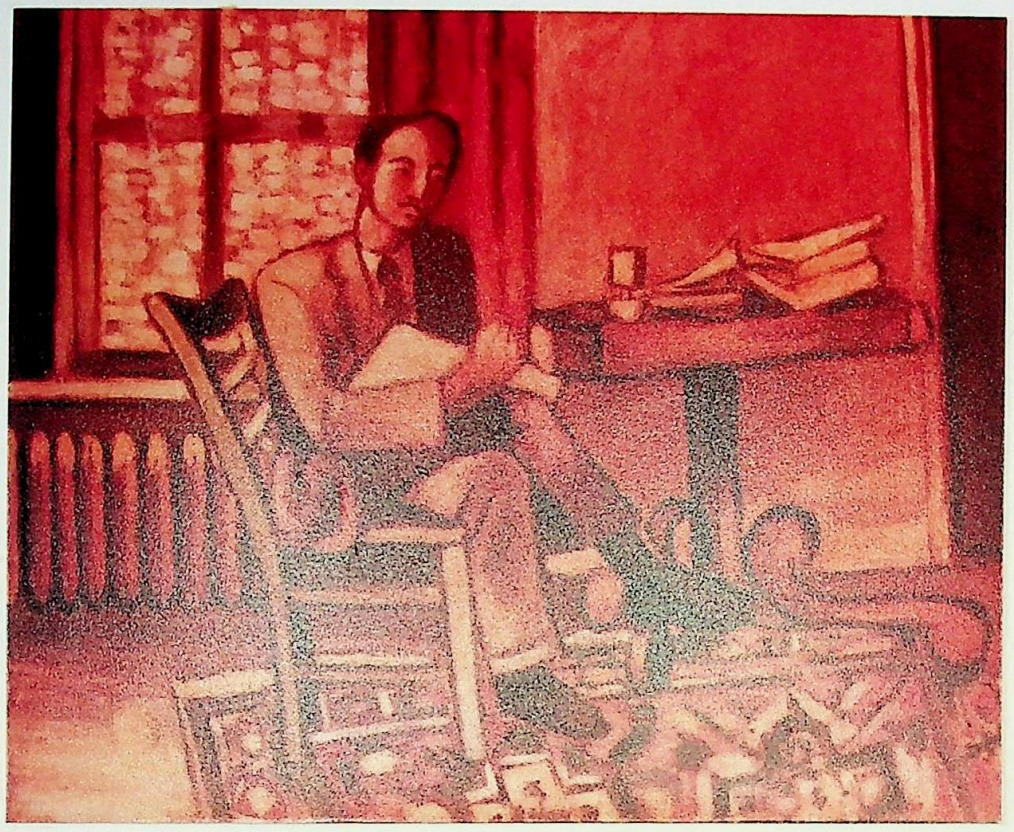
1. Adolph Gottlieb, PORTRAIT, c. 1923, oil on canvas.

2. Adolph Gottlieb, NUDE MODEL, c. 1923.

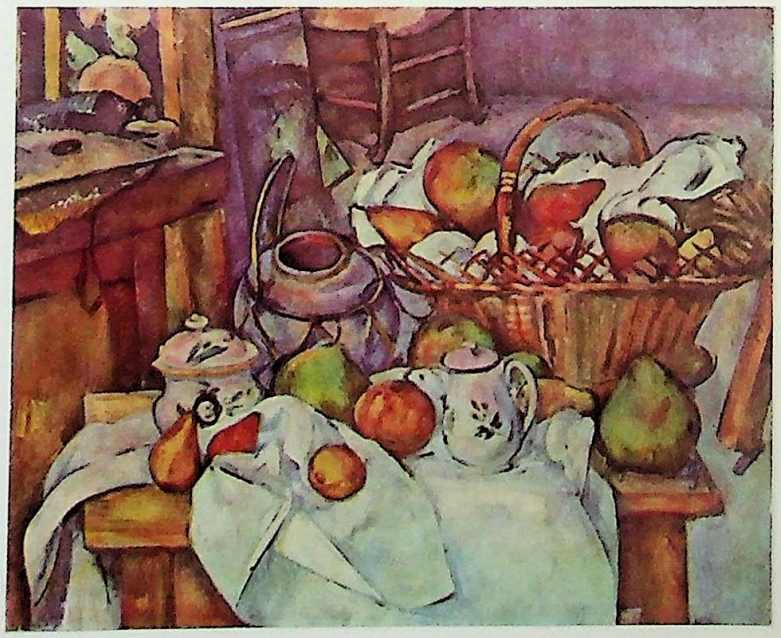
3. Gottlieb, STILL LIFE - GATE LEG TABLE, 1925, oil on canvas.



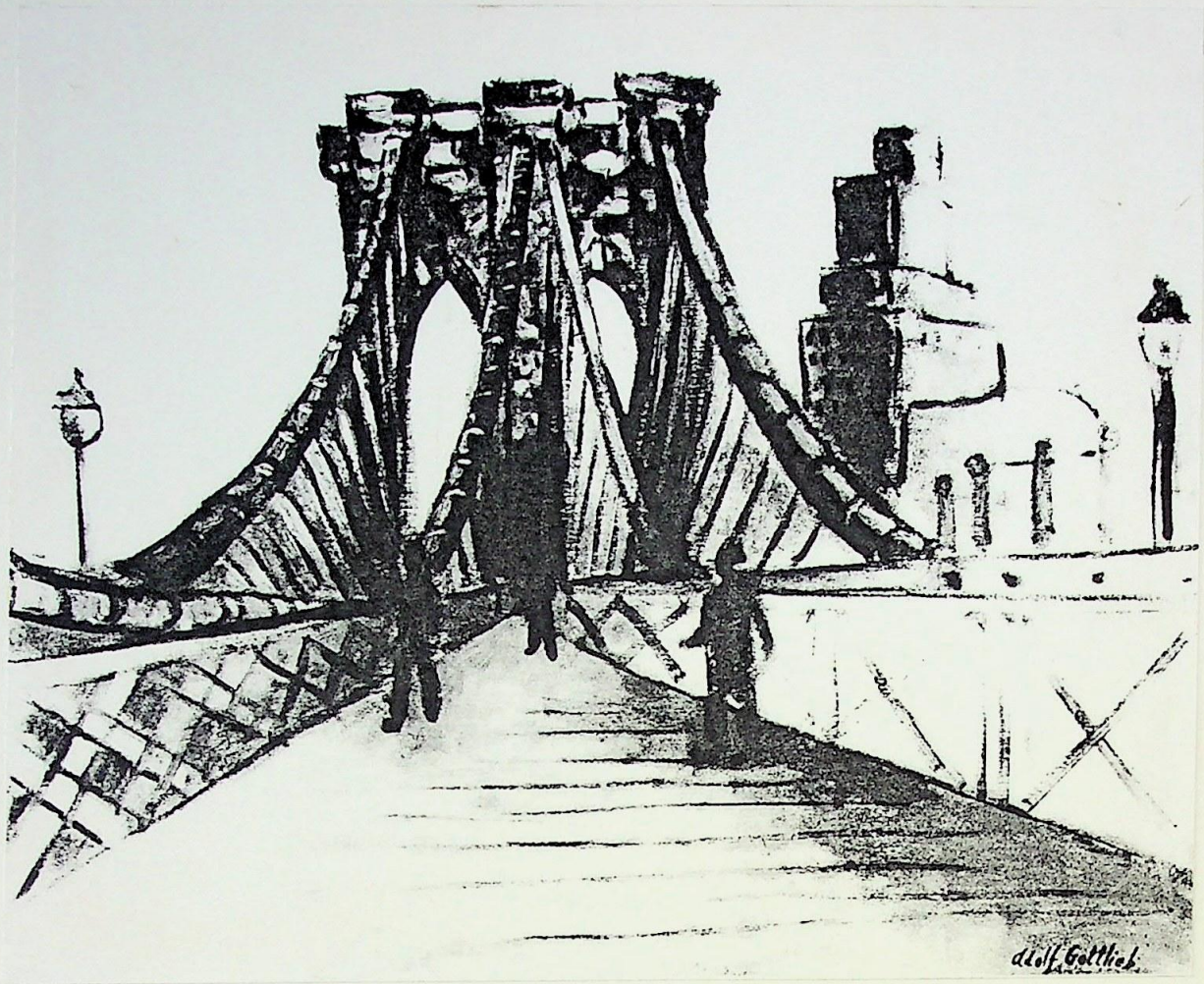
4. Gottlieb, GRAND CONCOURSE, c. 1927,
oil on canvas.



5. Gottlieb, INTERIOR(SELF-PORTRAIT), c. 1927, oil on canvas, 24" x 30".

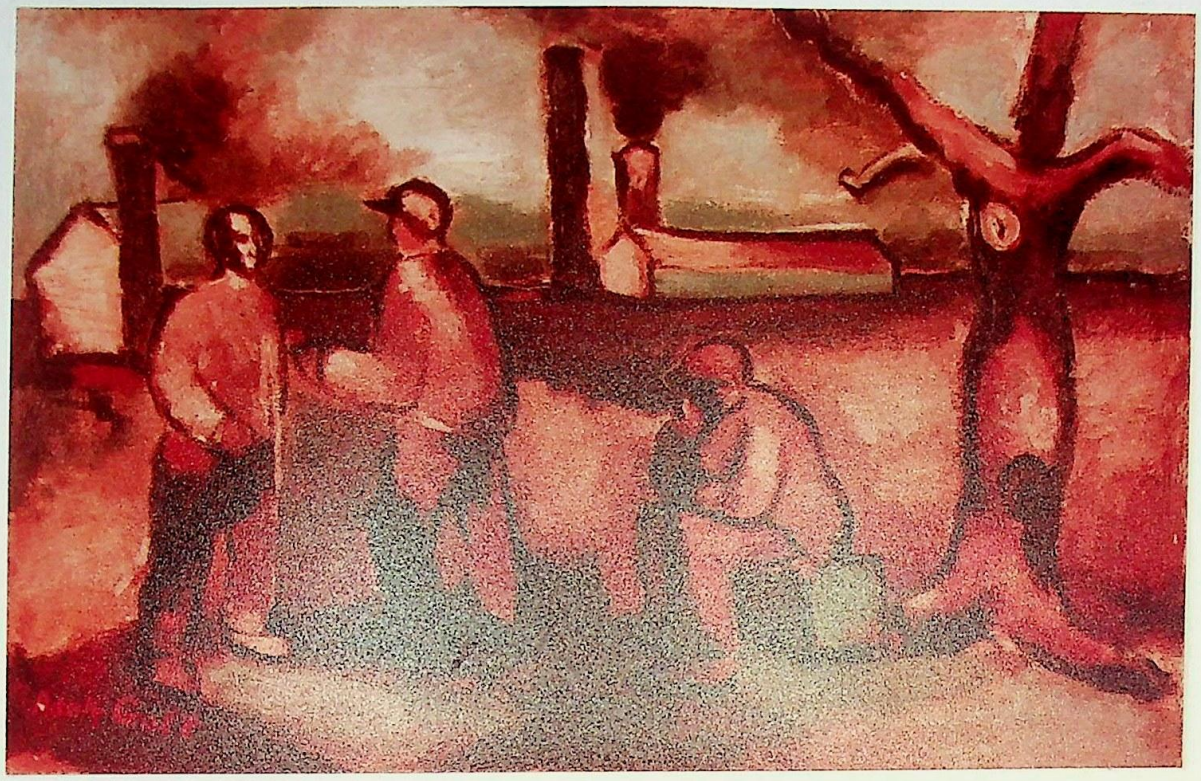


6. Paul Cezanne, STILL LIFE WITH BASKET, 1888-90.



7. Gottlieb, BROOKLYN BRIDGE, c. 1930, oil on canvas.

8. John Sloan, THE CITY FROM GREENWICH VILLAGE, 1922.



9. Gottlieb, THE WASTELAND, 1930, oil on canvas.

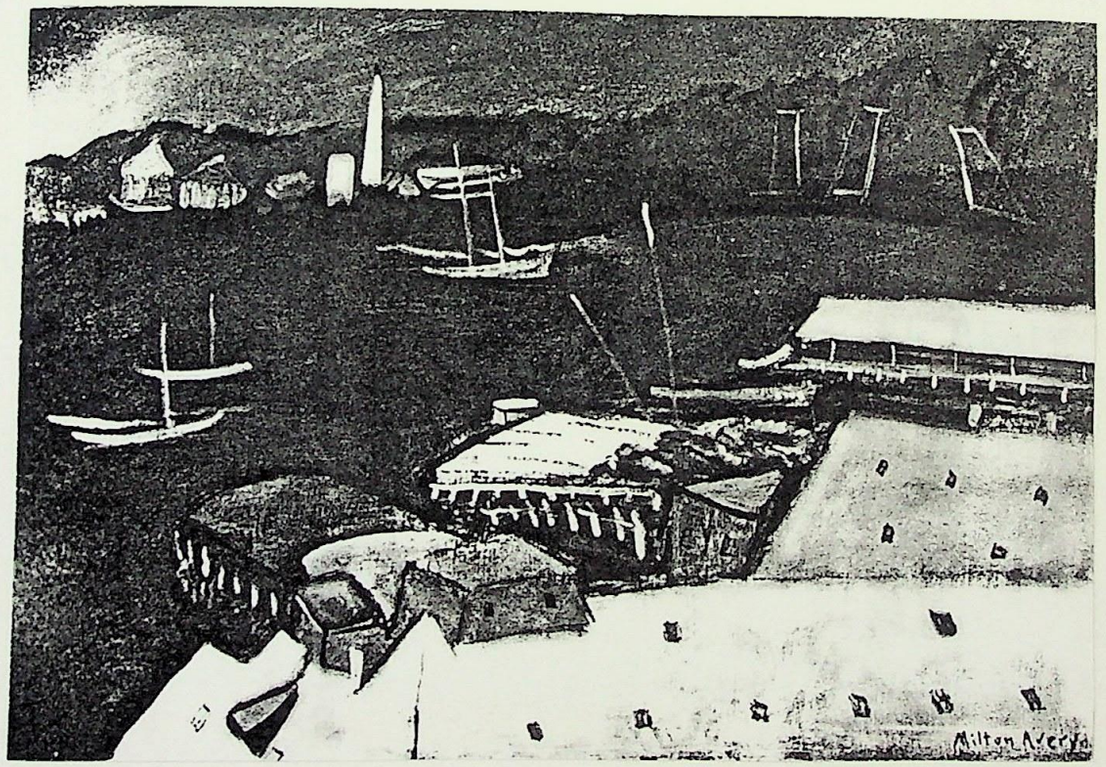
10. Gottlieb, ESTHER, 1931, oil on canvas, 19" x 24".

11. Gottlieb, UNTITLED (MAX MARGOLIS), c 1935, oil on canvas.

12. Milton Avery, MRS AVERY IN A CHECKED JACKET, 1939.

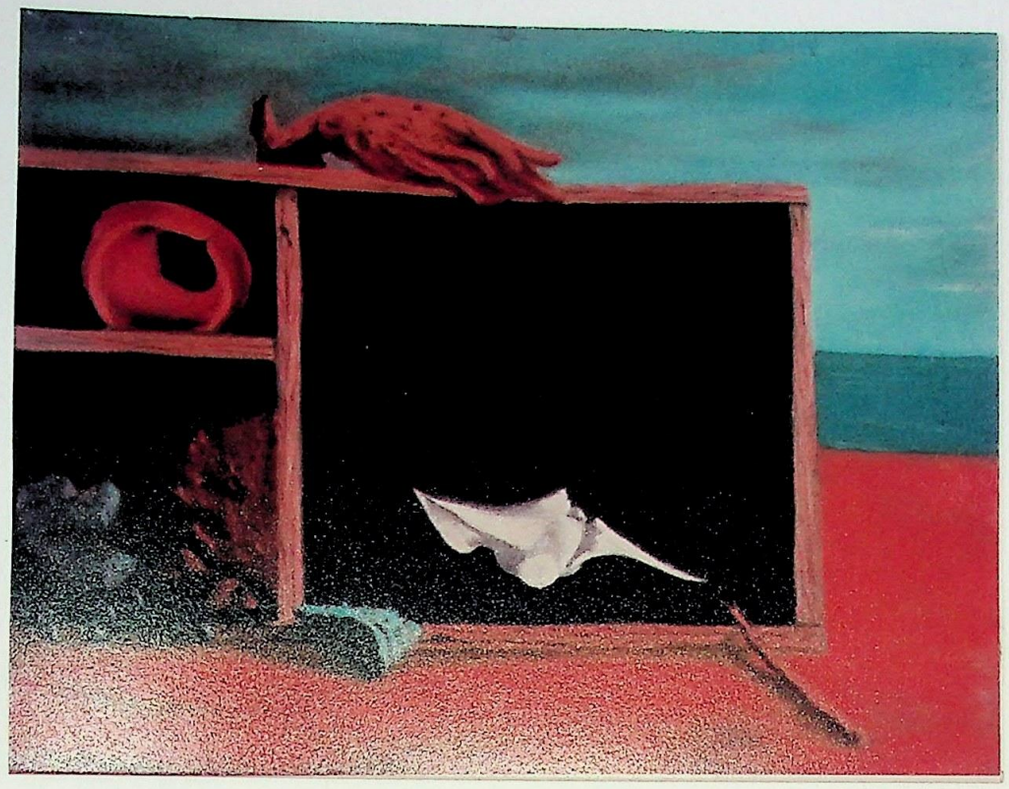
13. Gottlieb, SEATED NUDE, 1934, oil on canvas.

14. Gottlieb, UNTITLED (GLOUCESTER HARBOUR FISHERIES, c. 1933.

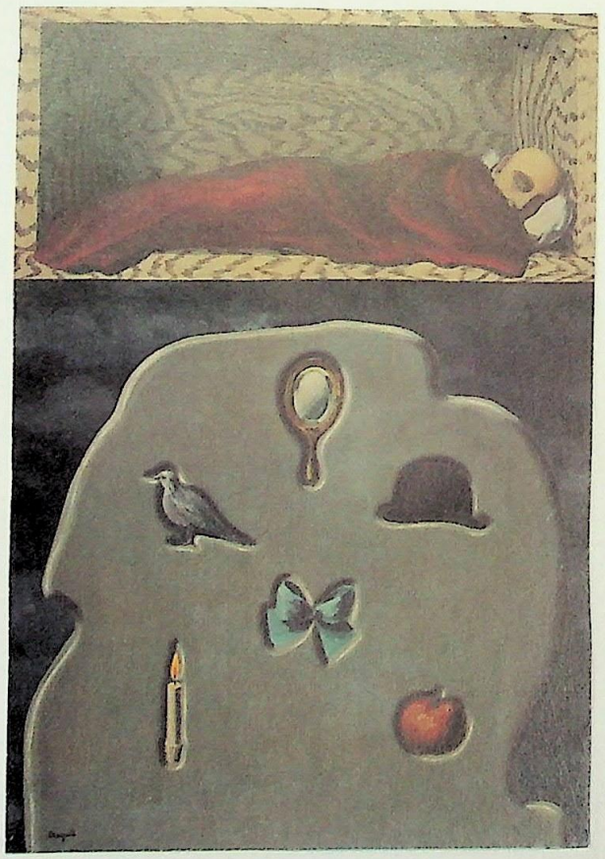


15. Milton Avery, HARBOUR AT NIGHT, 1932.

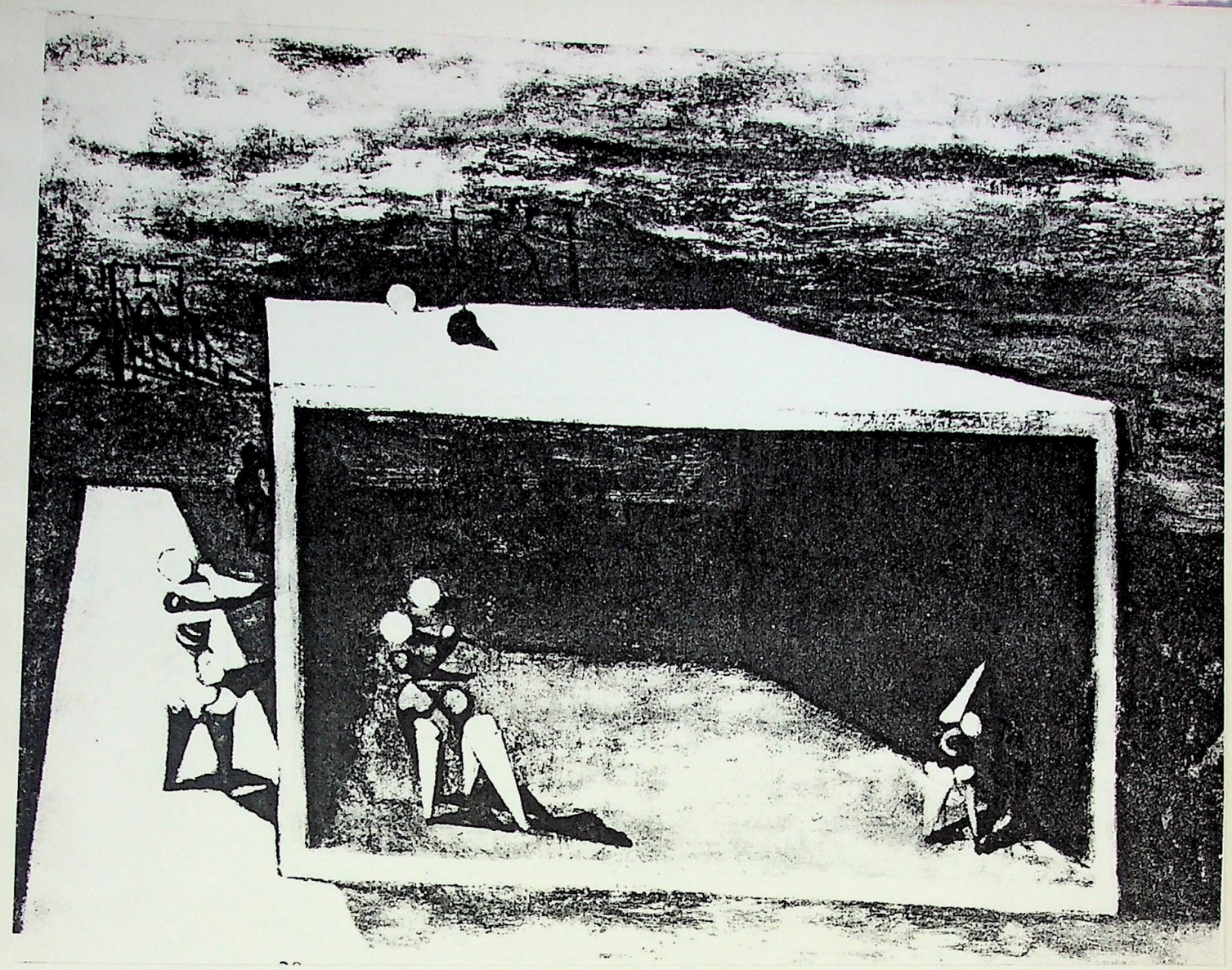
16. Gottlieb, SYMBOLS AND THE DESERT, 1938, oil on canvas.



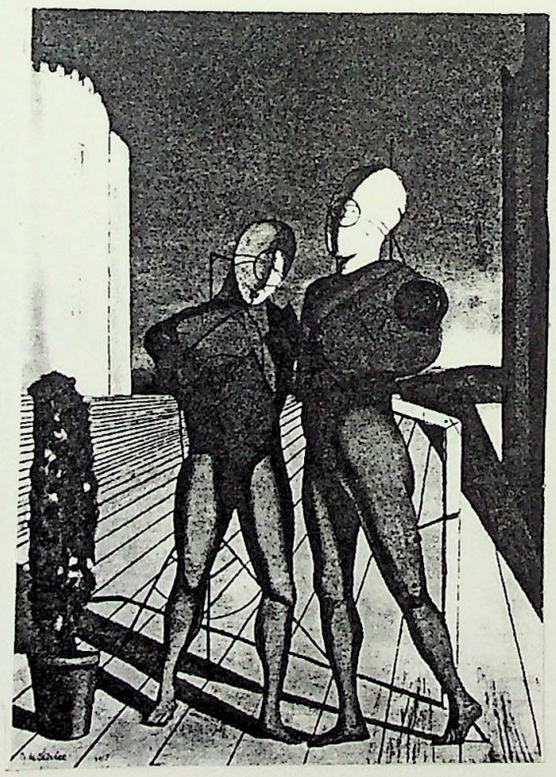
17. Gottlieb, UNTITLED (BOX AND SEA OBJECTS), 1940, oil on linen.



18. Rene Magritte, THE RECKLESS SLEEPER, 1927.



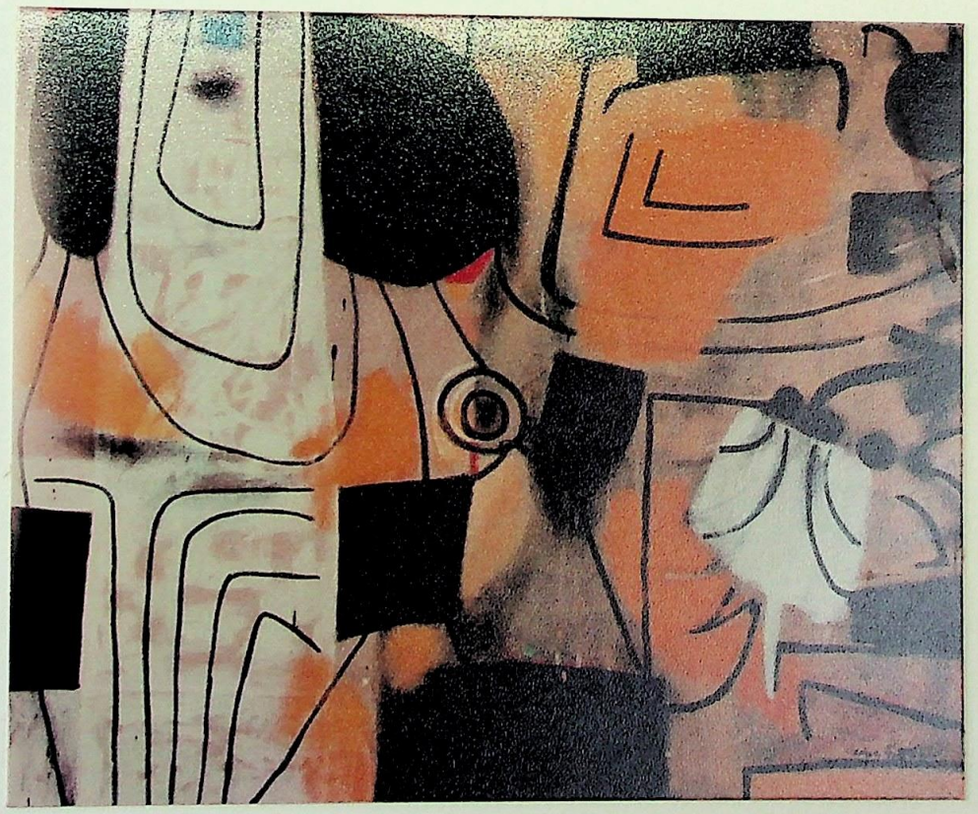
19. Gottlieb, PICNIC(BOX AND FIGURES), c 1939.



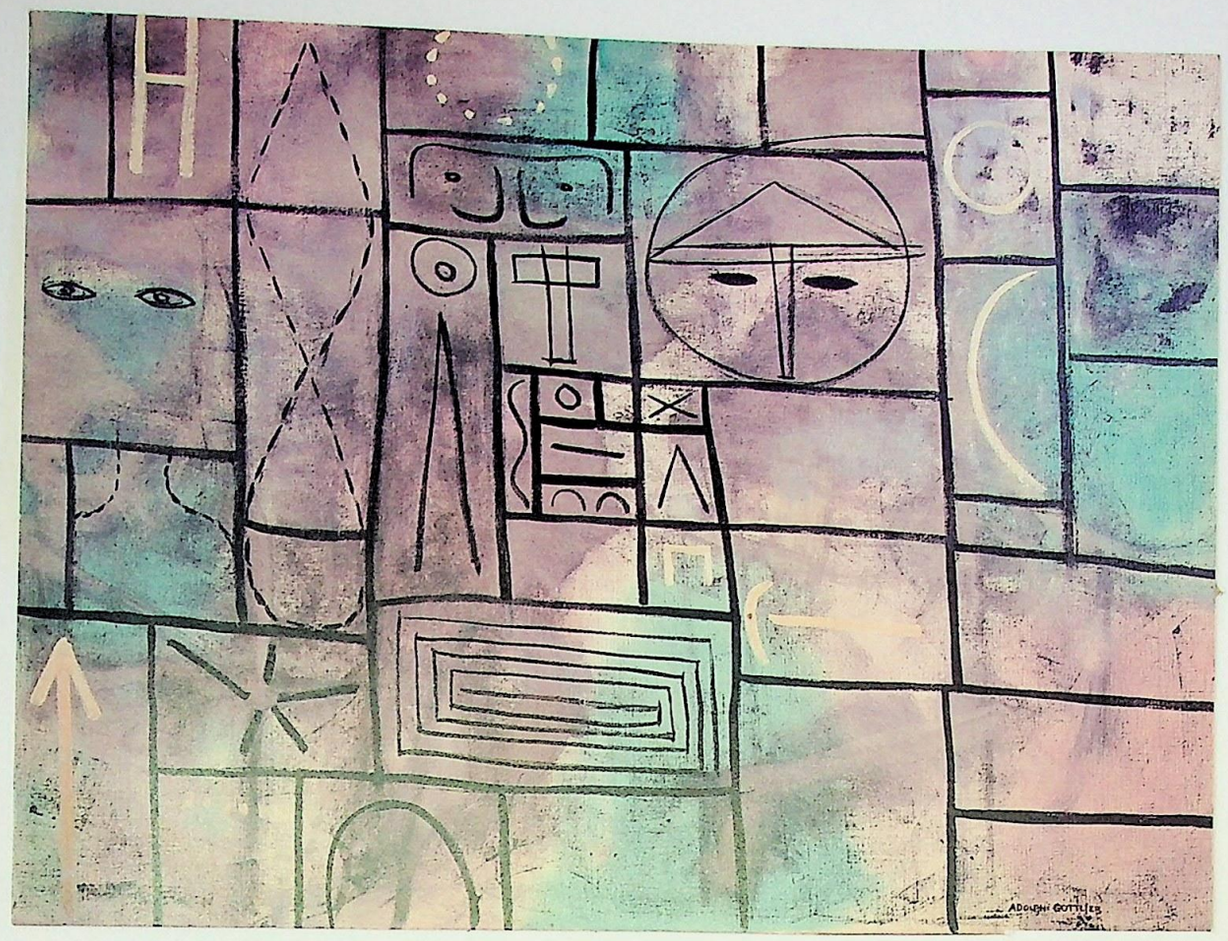
20. Giorgio De Chirico, THE DUO, 1915.

21. Gottlieb, EYES OF OEDIPUS, 1941, oil on canvas.

22. Gottlieb, PERESPHONE, 1942, oil on canvas.

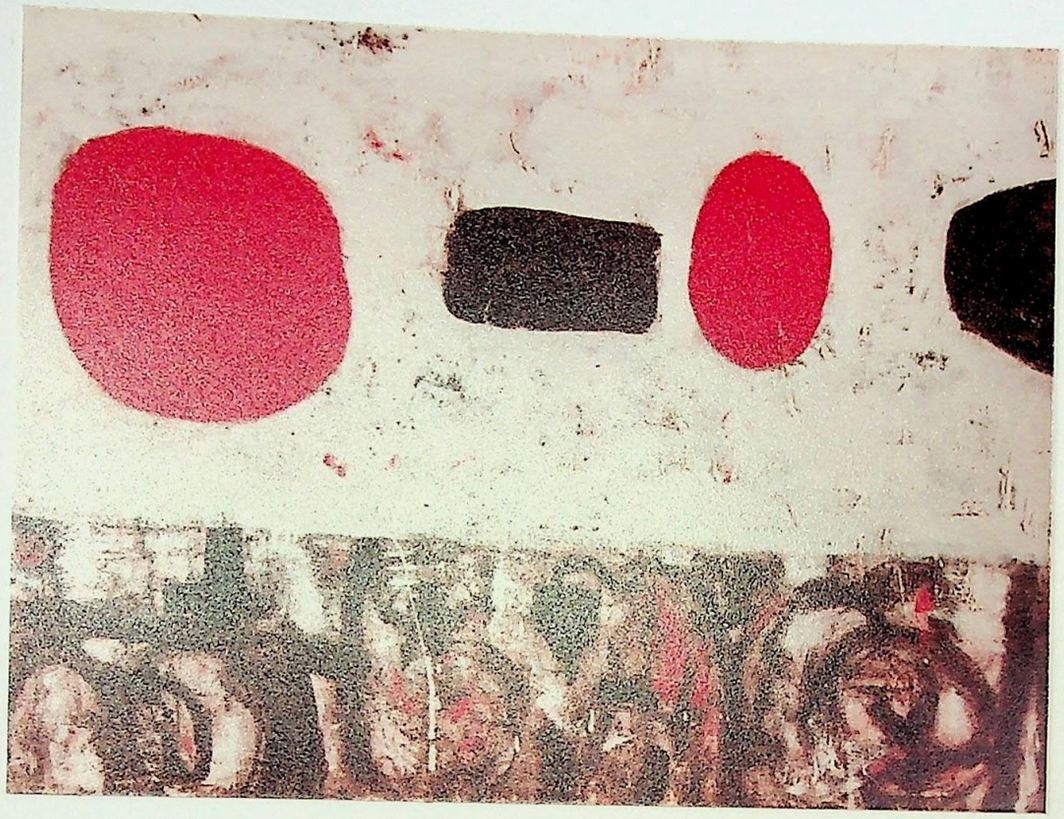


23. Gottlieb, FIGURATIONS OF CLANGOR, 1951, oil, gouache and tempera on burlap.



24. Gottlieb, LABYRINTH # 2, 1950, oil on linen, 36"x48".

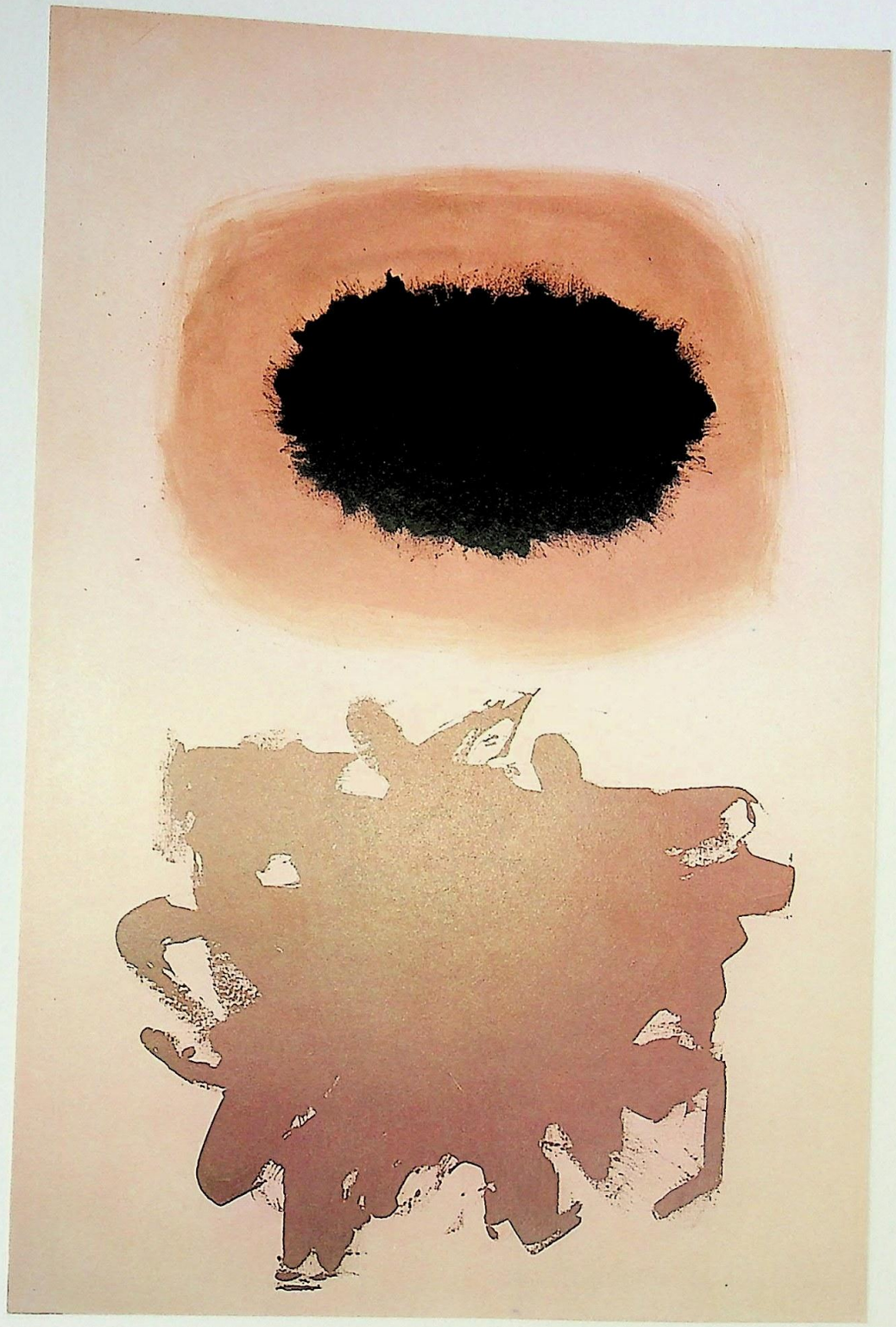
25. Gottlieb, UNSTILL LIFE, 1952, oil on canvas.



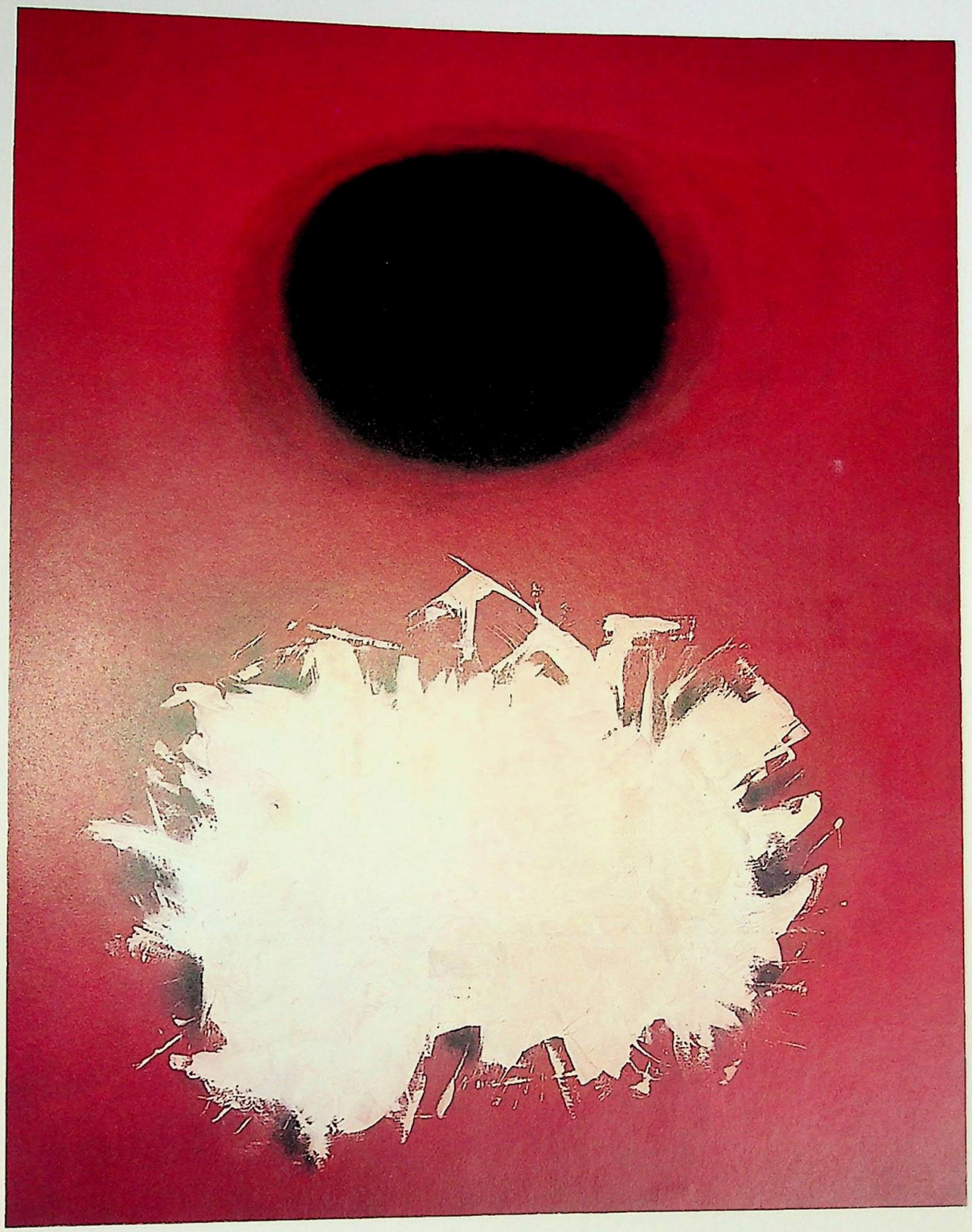
26. Gottlieb, THE FROZEN SOUNDS, # 2, 1952,
oil on canvas.

27. Gottlieb, THE COUPLE, 1955, oil on canvas, 72"x60".

28. Gottlieb, FROM MIDNIGHT TO DAWN, 1956, oil on canvas.



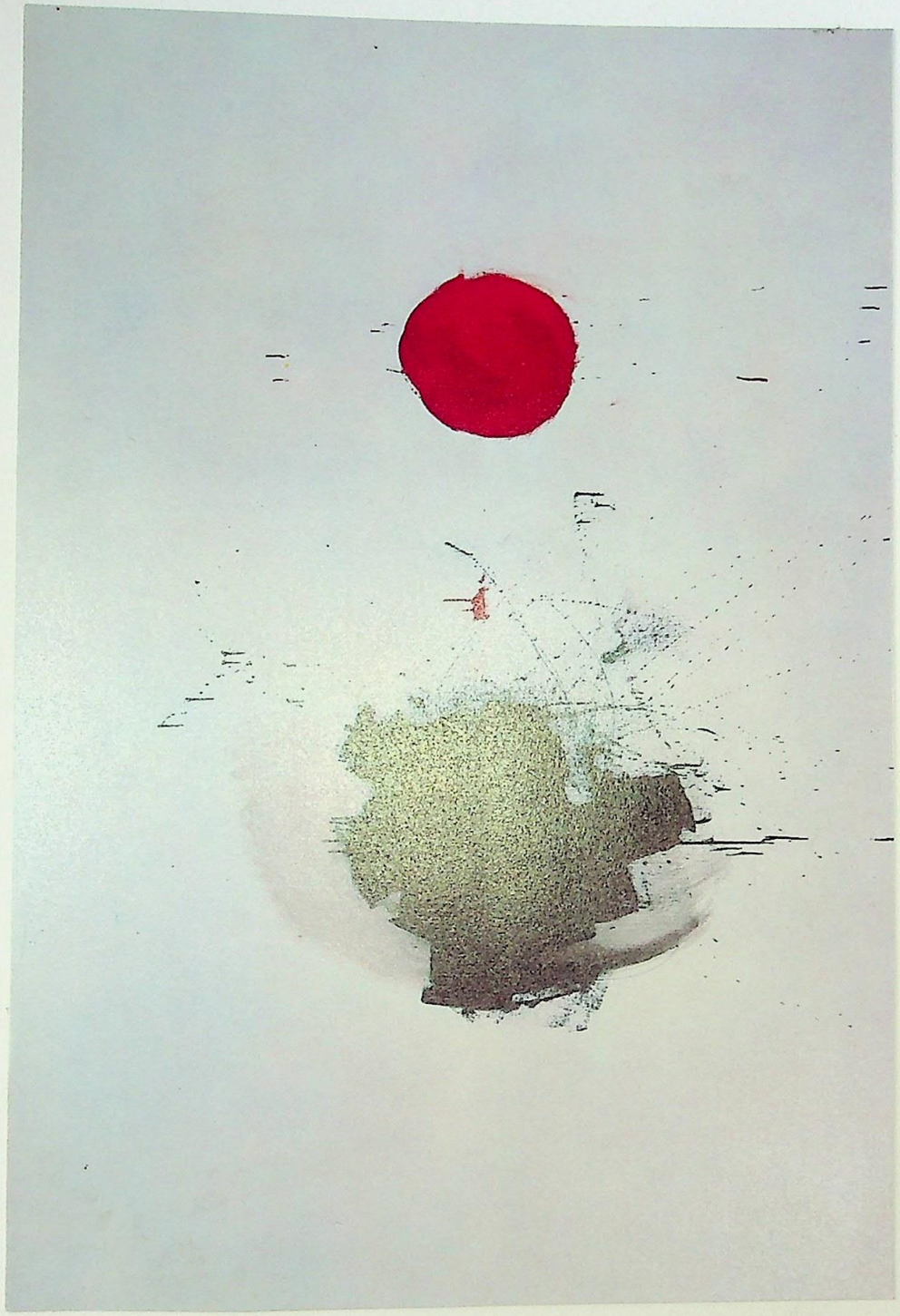
29. Gottlieb, POSITIVE, 1958, oil on canvas 90"x60".



30. Gottlieb, PINK SMASH, 1959, oil on canvas.

31. Gottlieb, APAQUOGUE, 1961, oil on canvas, 72"x90".

32. Gottlieb, FLOTSAM, 1968, oil and alkyd resin on linen, 48"x72".



33. Gottlieb, COLLISION, 1971,
oil and acrylic on canvas, 90x60".

34. Gottlieb, AMORPHOUS, 1973,
acrylic and alkyd resin on canvas, 84"x60".

APPENDIX

The following statements are typescripts from original documents; spelling and punctuation are that of the original authors.

Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko (with the assistance of Barnett Newman), Letter to Edward Alden Jewell, Art Editor, The New York Times, June 7, 1943.

June 7, 1943

Mr. Edward Alden Jewell
Art Editor, New York Times
229 West 43 Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Jewell:

To the artist, the workings of the critical mind is one of life's mysteries. That is why, we suppose, the artist's complaint that he is misunderstood, especially by the critic, has become a noisy commonplace. It is therefore, an event when the worm turns and the critic of the TIMES quietly yet publicly confesses his "befuddlement," that he is "non-plussed" before our pictures at the Federation Show. We salute this honest, we might say cordial reaction towards our "obscure" paintings, for in other critical quarters we seem to have created a bedlam of hysteria. And we appreciate the gracious opportunity that is being offered us to present our views.

We do not intend to defend our pictures. They make their own defense. We consider them clear statements. Your failure to dismiss or disparage them is prima facie evidence that they carry some communicative power.

We refuse to defend them because we cannot. It is an easy matter to explain to the befuddled that "The Rape of Persephone" is a poetic expression of the essence of the myth; the presentation of the concept of seed and its earth with all its brutal implications; the impact of elemental truth. Would you have us present this abstract concept with all its complicated feelings by means of a boy and girl lightly tripping?

It is just as easy to explain "The Syrian Bull", as a new interpretation of an archaic image, involving unprecedented distortions. Since art is timeless, the significant rendition of a symbol, no matter how archaic, has as full validity today as the archaic symbol had then. Or is the one 3000 years old truer?

But these easy program notes can help only the simple-minded. No possible set of notes can explain our paintings. Their explanation must come out of a consummated experience between picture and onlooker. The appreciation of art is a true marriage of minds. And in art, as in marriage, lack of consummation is ground for annulment.

The point at issue, it seems to us, is not an "explanation" of the paintings but whether the intrinsic ideas carried within the frames of these pictures have significance.

We feel that our pictures demonstrate our aesthetic beliefs, some of which we, therefore, list:

1. To us art is an adventure into an unknown world, which can be explored only by those willing to take the risks.

2. This world of the imagination is fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense.

3. It is our function as artists to make the spectator see the world our way - not his way.

4. We favour the simple expression of the complex thought. We are for the large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to reassert the picture plane. We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth.

5. It is a widely accepted notion among painters that it does not matter what one paints as long as it is well painted. This is the essence of academicism. There is no such thing as good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject matter is valid which is tragic and timeless. That is why we profess spiritual kinship with primitive and archaic art.

Consequently if our work embodies these beliefs, it must insult anyone who is spiritually attuned to interior decoration; pictures for the home; pictures for over the mantle; pictures of the American scene; social pictures; purity in art; prize-winning potboilers; the National Academy, the Whitney Academy, the Corn Belt Academy, buckeyes; trite tripe; etc.

Sincerely yours,

Adolph Gottlieb(signature)
Marcus Rothko(signature)

130 State Street
Brooklyn, New York

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

1903 Born in New York City.

1920 Attended the Art Student's League.

1921 Studied at the Academie de la Grange Chaumier, Paris.

1923 Studied at the Parsons School of Art and Design, New York.

1935 Founding member of "The Ten", a group devoted to expressionist and abstract painting.

1944 - 45 President of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors.

1958 Taught at Pratt Institute, New York and at the University of California, Los Angeles.

1967 Appointed to the Art Commission, City of New York.

1974 Died in New York City on March 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Alloway, Lawrence and MacNaughton, Mary Davis, Adolph Gottlieb: A Retrospective, The Arts Publisher, Inc., New Yrok, 1981.

Alloway, Lawrence. Topics in American Art Since 1945, W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1975.

Ashton, Dore. The Life and Times of the New York School, Adams and Dart, Somerset, 1972.

Goodyear, Frank H, Jr. Contemporary American Realism Since 1960, Little, Brown and Company, Canada, 1981.

Graham, John Systems and Dialectics of Art, Delphic Studios, New York, 1937.

Haskell, Barbara. Milton Avery, Harper and Row, New York, 1982.

Hobbs, Robert Charleton and Levin, Gail. Abstract Expressionism The Formative Years, Cornell University Press, London, 1981.

Lewis, I.M. Social Anthrapology in Perspective, Penguin Books, England, 1976.

Leymarie, Jean (foreward). Abstract Art Since 1945, Thames and Hudson, London, 1971.

Read, Herbert, edited by. Surrealism, Faber and Faber Ltd., London, 1971.

Rose, Barbara. American Art Since 1900, Thames and Hudson, London, 1975.

Rosenblum, Robert. Cubism and Twentieth Century Art,Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1976.

Rubin, William, edited by. Primitivism in Twentieth Century Art, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1984.

Sandler, Irving. Abstract Expressionism, The Triumph of American Painting, Pall Mall Press, London, 1970.

Waldberg, Patrick. Surrealism, Thames and Hudson, London, 1978.

Magazine and Various Articles

Barr, Alfred H. Cezanne, Gauguin, Sevrat, Van Gogh, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Cone, Jane Harrison. "Adolph Gottlieb", Artforum, 6, No. 8. April 1968.

Davis, Mary R. "The Pictographs of Adolph Gottlieb", Arts Magazine, 52, No. 3, Nov 1977.

Gottlieb, Adolph. "New York Exhibitions", MKR Art Outlook, No. 6, Dec 1945.

Gottlieb. The New Decade, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1955.

Gottlieb, and Rothko. "Letter to Alden Jewell, Art Editor", New York Times, Jun 7, 1943.

Gottlieb. The Tiger's Eye, Vol 1, No. 2, Dec 1947.

Jones, John. Interview with Adolph Gottlieb, Archives of American Art, 1965.

Roberts, Miriam. Adolph Gottlieb Painting 1921 - 1956, exhibition catalogue, Omaha, Nebr: Joslyn Art Museum, 1980.

Sandler, Irving. Adolph Gottlieb Paintings 1945 - 1974, Andre Emmerich Gallery, New York, Feb 1977.

Wilkin, Karen. "Adolph Gottlieb: The Pictographs", Art International, 21, Dec 1977.

Willard, Charlotte, "In the Art Galleries", New York Post, Jan 10, 1965.

Greenberg, Clement. "Abstract, Representational, and so forth", Art and Culture, Beacon Press, Boston, 1961.