

Les Paysages de mémoire
Iskowitz
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Landscapes and Memory-escapes

Tom Gordon

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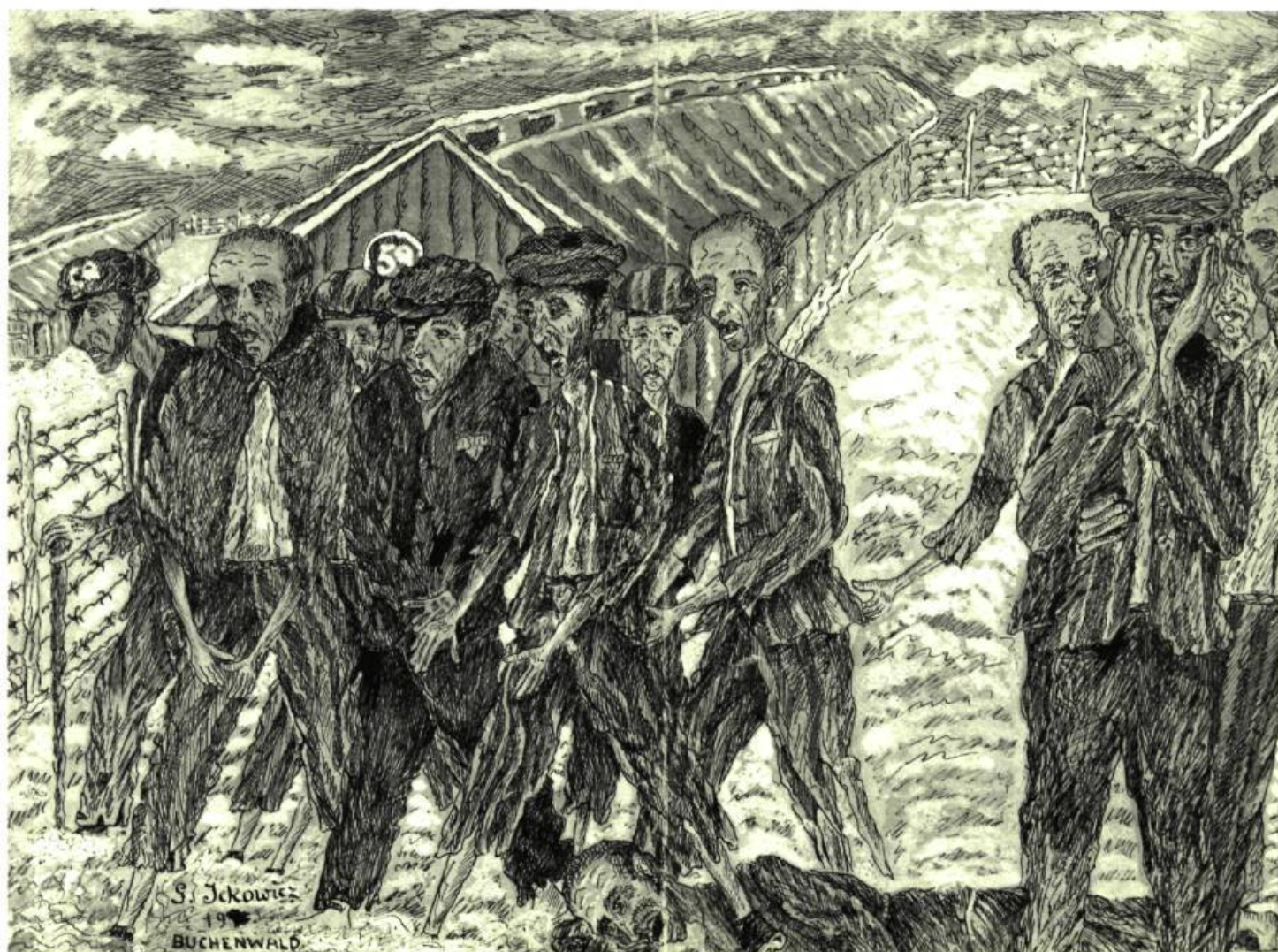
La Rétrospective Gershon Iskowitz¹ constitue pour les admirateurs des paysages imaginaires de ce peintre un témoignage joyeux de sa palette lumineuse. Depuis la fin des années soixante, Iskowitz, cartographe d'une fantaisie exubérante, a bénéficié de l'attention nationale et internationale. Mais cette exposition, qui porte sur une période de quarante ans, nous fait remonter dans l'œuvre de l'artiste jusqu'à une cartographie tout autre, du temps où ses toiles portaient la trace des contours torturés du souvenir.

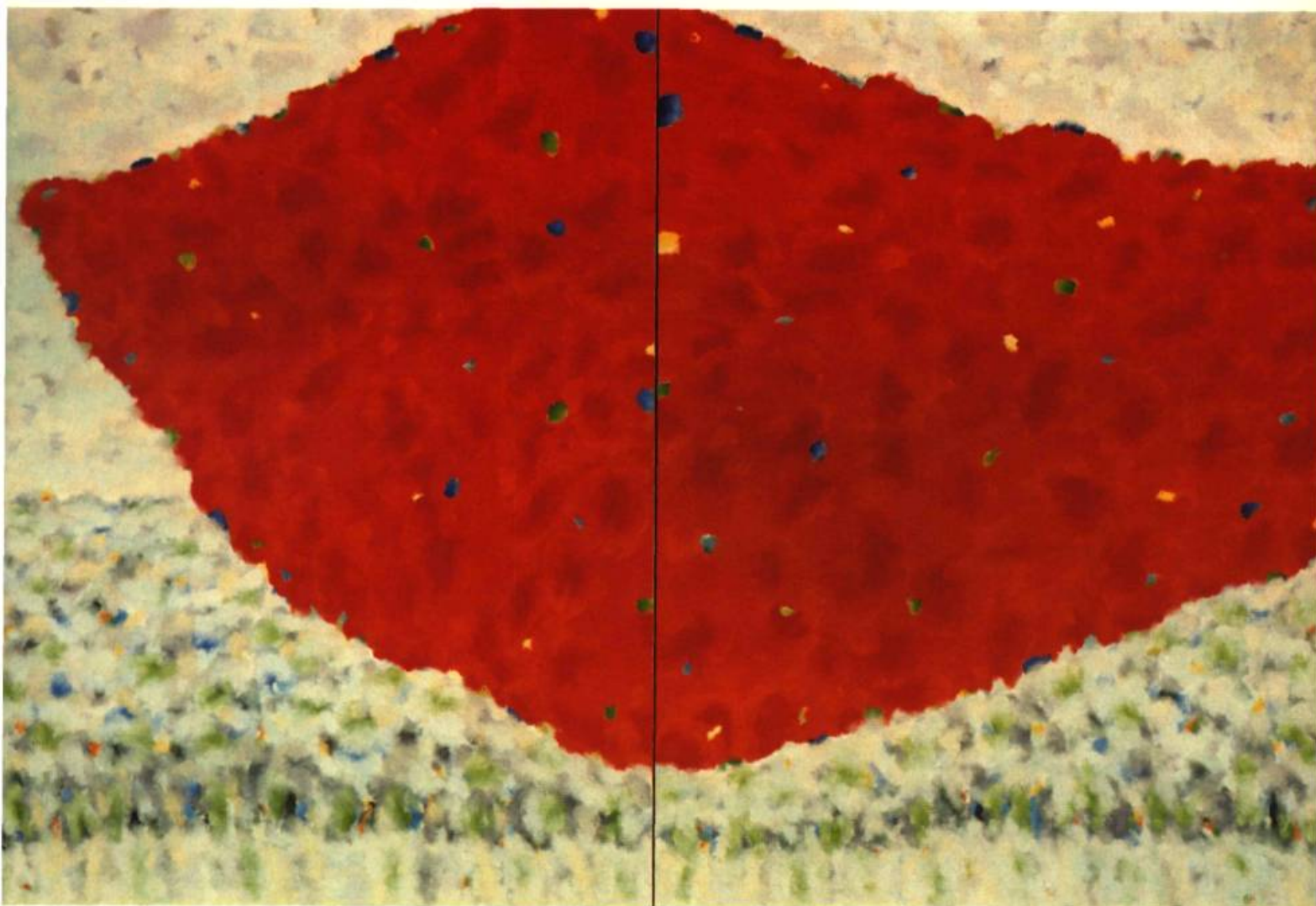
Né, en 1921, à Kielce (Pologne), il devait entrer, en septembre 1939, à l'Académie des Arts de Varsovie, mais il en fut empêché par la guerre. Il passa les cinq ans et demi qui suivirent dans un camp de travail, puis dans les camps de concentration d'Auschwitz et de Buchenwald. En avril 1945, à la libération de Buchenwald, il était presque mort, souffrant de la faim et de blessures. Il passa deux ans à se remettre, puis, en janvier 1947, s'inscrivit à l'Académie d'Art de Munich. Mais il abandonna bientôt ces études officielles en faveur de cours privés avec Oscar Kokoschka. Sa famille ayant tout entière péri aux mains

D'origine polonaise et élève de Kokoshka, Gershon Iskowitz a pratiqué, au début, un art fortement influencé par le milieu carcéral, témoignant des atrocités d'Auschwitz et de Büchenwald. Plus tard, en terre canadienne, il en est venu à une expression plus sereine des paysages de la mémoire. La présente rétrospective est un hommage, et retrace l'itinéraire artistique d'Iskowitz qui va du figuratif à l'abstrait.

Les Paysages de mémoire Iskowitz

Tom GORDON





1. Gershon ISKOWITZ
Büchenwald, 1944-1945.
 Aquarelle et encre; 38 cm 1 x 50,8.

2. *Uplands H.*, 1972.
 Huile sur toile à deux volets; 2 m 41 x 1,82 chacun.
 (Photos Larry Ostrom, Musée de l'Ontario)

des Nazis, il se décida à émigrer au Canada où un de ses oncles, qu'il rejoignit en septembre 1949, était établi à Toronto. Depuis, il n'a pas quitté cette ville, à l'exception d'excursions vers le Nord proche et lointain; il en vint, vers la fin des années soixante, à reconnaître dans la topographie monumentale et fluide de ces régions «toutes ces choses (dit-il lui-même) qui survenaient dans mes tableaux».

Les œuvres les plus anciennes de l'exposition datent de l'internement d'Iskowitz à Kielce (1941) et à Buchenwald (1944-1945). Réalisés avec des aquarelles et de l'encre de sa fabrication, des dessins, comme *Buchenwald*, 1945, portent témoignage de ce qui allait devenir pour Iskowitz une obsession constante: créer l'art à partir de la vie, de sa vie. Mais ce que ces œuvres ont de plus bouleversant, c'est qu'elles relatent à la première personne l'atrocité la plus indicible de l'histoire de

l'humanité, l'artiste évoquant les actes de barbarie au moyen de déformations grossières et pathétiques. Entre 1947 et 1952, l'ensemble des œuvres comporte un exorcisme rituel du souvenir de l'atrocité. Dans *Selection Auschwitz*, 1947, un bataillon de cadavres blêmes se tient péniblement dans un garde-à-vous contraint, les pieds enfoncés dans des rigoles sanglantes, tandis que l'un d'entre eux est envoyé vers l'exécution que leurs âmes ont déjà endurée. Pour ce qui est de *Ghetto*, 1947, on y voit une madone en fil barbelé, masse sculpturale dont les mains maladroites et engourdies offrent à son enfant mort une chaleur futile. L'une des huiles les plus anciennes de l'exposition, *The Artist's Mother*, dégage toute l'émotion d'un souvenir douloureux que la mémoire accepte d'estomper. En action de grâce, le survivant crée in memoriam une série inoubliable d'icônes surréelles. Il utilise dans toute cette période une étonnante variété de techniques: des hachures brutales dans les dessins comme *Hunger*, 1951, à des gouaches opaques et tumultueuses, telle *Explosion* 1952; de formes accomplies comme *Autoportrait* de 1947, qui rappelle Kokoschka, à des fables à la Chagall, comme *Market*, 1953-1954. Le raffinement d'une technique de mieux en mieux maîtrisée est contrebalancé par l'aspect direct d'une naïveté délibérée. *Side Street*, 1952, effectue une syntèse de ces différentes manières, dans un flamboiement de couleurs violemment expressives.

Ce n'est guère qu'en 1952 qu'Iskowitz a commencé à échapper au poids de la mémoire. Trois ans après son arrivée au Canada, il réalisa une série de paysages au crayon feutre. Menaçants par leur profusion calligraphique, ils restent cependant peu convaincants, trop travaillés. Même lorsqu'il emploie l'huile (*Apple Orchard*, 1952), Iskowitz intègre mal à son univers intensément personnel et introspectif les sujets que lui fournit le paysage canadien classique. Mais, on perçoit un changement de perspective dans un groupe d'esquisses à l'aquarelle (*Parry Sound*, 1955) où des formes flottantes de couleurs claires se détachent sur la gravité ambivalente d'une ligne d'horizon à peine suggérée.

Les œuvres qui marquent cette évolution datent du début des années soixante: Iskowitz travaille alors à bien plus grande échelle qu'auparavant et abandonne le paysage conventionnel en faveur d'une topographie imaginaire. Deux autoportraits révélateurs, (*Self-portrait*, 1963, et *Seated Figure*, 1964), indiquent la fusion de la mémoire de l'artiste avec une juxtaposition sensuelle de couleurs bigarrées qu'il a également utilisées pour évoquer des impressions d'arbres (*Spring*, 1962) et de ciel (*Autumn Sky*, 1964). Ainsi naissent des abstractions qui annoncent la maturité de l'art du coloriste. Dans *Summer Skies*, 1966, des stries informes dont les bleus sont pommelés de jaune irradient depuis la limite inférieure du tableau. Seul le cadre, peint de façon artificielle, s'oppose à l'expansion des courants ondoyants. C'est une chorégraphie au rythme étourdissant que dessinent à la surface de *Summer Blues*, 1966, des ruisselets à la disposition excentrique et aux teintes lumineuses – bleus, jaunes, rouges. En 1967, au cours de vols en hélicoptère à partir de Churchill, Manitoba, Iskowitz trouva une confirmation de sa cartographie fantasque et aérienne, et depuis, ses cartes de la mémoire portent la marque d'une confiance exubérante. Un rythme paisible où jouent les couleurs vives ou atténuées anime la série monumentale des *Uplands*, 1970-1972, où des formes

gigantesques, tronquées, flottent de façon peu plausible sur une ligne d'horizon capitonée et indistincte. Dans ces peintures, les quelques formes distinctes échappent à l'attraction de la force de gravité. Les toiles ultérieures intensifient ces taches colorées et les catapultent avec une vélocité irrésistible à travers un champ de force encombré et actif (*Newscape*, 1976), à moins qu'elles ne tentent de les contrecarrer au moyen d'un écran surchargé de peinture, d'un caractère plus neutre (*Night Greens D*, 1981). La mémoire récente d'Iskowitz vibre d'un sens de la couleur hardi et personnel.

Si l'exposition a un défaut, c'est d'être marquée par cet impératif qu'impose constamment l'histoire de l'art: démontrer l'émergence du style d'un artiste. Tout, dans cette exposition, incite à interpréter chaque œuvre dans une succession chronologique, comme le fruit d'une maturation dont l'œuvre précédente ne révélait que quelques indices: ainsi, le beau catalogue² rend compte de l'œuvre en la rationalisant, pour l'opposer à la théorie post-moderniste, et l'accrochage lui-même va dans ce sens, par les lignes de vision qu'il impose. La rétrospective Iskowitz porte donc la trace d'une volonté didactique de persuasion. Cette conception inévitablement évolutionniste risque d'occulter la valeur propre de chaque tableau. Or, dans une exposition où l'émotion dégagée par les premiers «paysages de mémoire» est aussi forte que l'euphorie des paysages plus récents, chacune des cartographies mentales d'Iskowitz guide, avec une puissance de conviction qui lui est propre, l'exploration de son territoire.

1. D'abord montrée au Musée de l'Ontario, du 23 janvier au 7 mars 1982, (cette exposition doit ensuite se rendre au Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal, du 20 mai au 27 juin; au Musée régional de London (Ont.), du 9 juillet au 22 août; au Musée Glenbow, de Calgary, du 1er novembre au 12 décembre, à la Maison du Canada de Londres, du 23 février au 22 mars 1983.
2. David Burnett, *Iskowitz*. Toronto, Musée de l'Ontario, 1982.

(Traduction de Sophie Mayoux)

Original English Text, p. 92

3. *Yzhor*, 1952.
Aquarelle et encre; 30 cm 5 x 40,6.



Like several other Canadian artists, Varley participated in the Canadian War Records from which sketches and finished works are included in this exhibition. The well known *For What?* and *Some Day The People Will Return* (exhibited in Ottawa only) are potent works imbued with reaction to the senselessness of war that Varley shared with many others but which is perhaps not often portrayed in the visual arts, having had a much longer tradition in the literary arts. In intent and pathos these works are akin to Daumier's *Rue Transnonain, Avril 15, 1834* and are among the finest of our national treasures. The London *Nation* in 1919 summed up Varley's *For What?* as follows: "There is one picture by Capt. F.H. Varley, of a tip-cart. It is canted on the side of a shell-crater which is nearly full of drainage. Beyond it, in that winter light which in Flanders seemed to have a quality of indescribable austerity, to be quite alien and other-world, and disciplined with exactitude across a stretch of ochreous muck, is a parade of neat little white crosses. One of a labor battalion leans on his spade and contemplates the cart. More work! It is loaded with a tangle of legs and arms. The title of the picture is "For What...?" Who can say? Who dares to put that question, not to the world, but to himself?"⁴

It is regrettable indeed that Varley was not given the opportunity of painting the 14-foot mural on a wall of the proposed, through never materialized, War Memorials museum in Ottawa. Augustus John was also to have painted a mural and both he and Varley had done planning and preliminary sketches for the project. Varley's oil sketch on wood panel called *Night Before a Barrage*, 1919 is described by C. Varley as "the first painting that revealed his mature colour and refined delicacy of touch. It is also a remarkable pictorial invention, a back-lit scene against which the silhouettes of a few figures emerge in the glimmering firelight of the otherwise darkened foreground".⁵ Indeed, the equilibrium of thrusting lines and shapes presents a visually stimulating image.

During his artistic career Varley painted numerous portraits and it is most revealing to compare and contrast his execution of what one may call commissioned formal portraits of public figures with his self-selected and more intimate portraits of individuals whom he knew and liked. While the former are not lacking in humaneness and character study they very much bear out the aspect of officialdom; the sense of recording something for posterity is present, a posterity that might not care about the warmth of the person behind the image. But the intimate portraits sparkle with the combined personalities of the sitter and the artist, and it is obvious that the artist treasured the opportunity of rendering the sitter's likeness. In the majority of the portraits Varley favoured an off-centre vertical axis composition of the sitter who was usually casually positioned and shown against a uniformly monochromatic rendered background without any of the traditional iconographic props that would give clues to the status, position, or interests of the sitter. Varley, like other late nineteenth and twentieth century artists, was not interested in anecdotal rendering but was involved in psychological character analysis, seeking to interpret, not simply to portray. In several portraits Varley created a fine dynamic balance of light and dark, as may be seen in *Portrait of Margaret Fairley*, 1921. Note that Varley's convention for depicting his female sitters is to show them with long necks that set off the heads in a most aristocratic manner—not necessarily true to life, as may be seen when comparing the portraits and photographs of Vera Weatherbie Lamb.

Most retrospective exhibitions by their very nature are extensive and this one is no exception. Works that are not outstanding are included to allow for a comprehensive assessment of the artist's oeuvre. Some works definitely support that Varley was uneven, or, to put it positively, was searching to find the right manner of expression. The viewer does leave with an awareness of the multifarious nature of this artist and the acknowledgement that Varley was not just a portrait painter who also created the Group-inspired, *Stormy Weather, Georgian Bay*. Rather he was an artist who, especially after relocating to the West Coast, was inspired by the environment and created unique and personal landscape interpretations, interpretations that extend beyond the conventional Group landscape tradition.

What sort of artist was Varley, who lived from 1881 to 1969? Solid—with a sense of adventure, although not the type of innovator or trail blazer that his European contemporaries were. Just recall the contributions of Hans Hofmann (1880-1966), Fernand Léger (1883-1966), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Georges Braque (1882-1963), Gino Severini (1883-1966), Max Beckmann (1884-1950), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) and Giorgio De Chirico (1888-1978).

1. Itinerary: Edmonton Art Gallery, October 16th to December 6th 1981; Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, December 18th, 1981 to January 24th, 1982; National Gallery of Art, February 12th to April 4th, 1982; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, April 23 to May 30, 1982; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, September 18th to November 13th, 1982.

2. Clement Greenberg, "Clement Greenberg's View of Art on the Prairies", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 20, No. 2, March-April 1963, p. 98.

3. Christopher Varley, *F.H. Varley: A Centennial Exhibition*, The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1981, p. 94.

4. George Elliott, "F.H. Varley—Fifty Years of His Art", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Autumn 1954, pp. 4, 6.

5. Varley, p. 52.

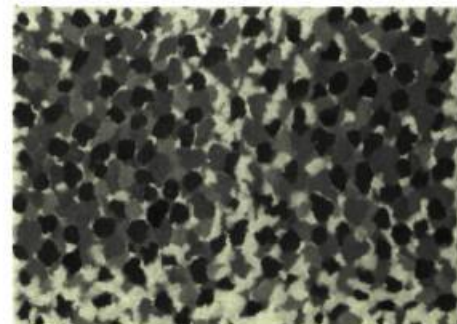
ISKOWITZ: LANDSCAPES AND MEMORY—ESCAPES

By Tom GORDON

To the admirers of his imaginary landscapes over the past fifteen years, the Gershon Iskowitz retrospective¹ offers a joyous affirmation of the artist's brilliant palette. Since the later sixties Iskowitz has received national and international attention as a map-maker of exuberant fantasy. But the forty year purview of the exhibition traces the artist's work back to a cartography of a different sort, when his canvases recorded the tortured contours of memory.

Born in 1921 in Kielce, Poland, Iskowitz's entry into the Warsaw Academy of Art in September, 1939 was thwarted by the outbreak of the War. During the ensuing five and a half years he was assigned to forced labour and subsequently the concentration camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald. The liberation of Buchenwald in April, 1945 found him starved, wounded and near death. A two year convalescence ended when Iskowitz enrolled at the Munich Academy of Art in January, 1947. His formal studies were soon abandoned in favour of private sessions with Oscar Kokoschka. The loss of his entire family at the hands of the Nazis precipitated his emigration from Europe and in September, 1949 he joined an uncle in Canada, settling in Toronto. He has lived in Toronto since, with occasional excursions to the near and distant north, where, in the later sixties he came to recognize in its monumental and fluid topography, "all those things that were happening in my paintings".

The earliest works in the exhibition date from the period of Iskowitz's internment at Kielce (1941) and Buchenwald (1944-45). Created with makeshift watercolour and ink, drawings like *Buchenwald* (1945) are a testament to what was to be Iskowitz's life-long obsession with making art from life—his life. Far more compellingly, however, they are a first-person witness to the most unspeakable atrocity of humankind, in which the artist matched the barbarousness of the acts recorded with a coarse and pathetic distortion. The entire ensemble of works from 1947 to 1952 comprises a ritualistic exorcism of the memory of that atrocity. In *Selection Auschwitz* (1947), a pallid battalion of corpses stands at listless attention, feet planted in furrows of blood, while one of their number is ordered to the execution their souls have already endured. *Ghetto* (1947) describes a barbed-wire madonna as a sculpturesque mass whose clumsy, numbed hands offer futile warmth to her dead child. One of the earliest oils in the exhibition, *The Artist's Mother* (1947), has the pathos of a memory in merciful dissolve. Iskowitz's atonement to memory for having survived builds up a haunting gallery of surreal icons. Throughout this period his technique is astonishingly varied: from the brutal cross-hatching in drawn pieces like *Hunger* (1951), to the tumultuous opaque gouaches, like *Explosion* (1952); from the accomplished Kokoschka-like *Self-Portrait* (1947) to the Chagallian fables like *Market* (1953-54). The sophistication of accumulating technique is counterpointed by the directness of intentional naïveté. A work like *Side Street* (1952) effects a synthesis in a searingly expressive blaze of colour.



2. Gershon ISKOWITZ
Newscape, 1976.
Oil on canvas; 152 cm x 208.
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Not until 1952 did Iskowitz begin to find ab-solution from the terrain of his memory. Three years after his arrival in Canada he sketched a series of felt pen landscapes. Menacing in their calligraphic profusion, they seem nonetheless studied and unconvincing. Even when translated to oil (*Apple Orchard*, 1952), the orthodox Canadian landscape was an unresponsive subject to Iskowitz's highly introspective, self-filtered world. But a group of watercolour sketches (*Parry Sound*, 1955) intimates an alteration of perspective as light coloured forms float about against the ambivalent gravity of a suggested horizon line.

The pivotal works in the exhibition date from the early sixties when Iskowitz, working on a much larger scale than before, abandoned conventional landscape for an imaginary topography. A pair of telling self-portraits (*Self-portrait*, 1963 and *Seated Figure*, 1964) documents the merger of the artist's memory with the sensual and mottled patchwork of

colours that he also used to describe impressions of trees (*Spring*, 1962) and sky (*Autumn Sky*, 1964). The resultant abstractions herald the maturity of a colourist's art. *Summer Skies* (1966) radiates amorphous striations in yellow-flecked blues from the bottom line. Only the artificially painted frame contains the rippling currents of colour. Eccentrically arranged rivulets of brilliant reds, blues, and yellows chart a dazzling rhythm on the choreographed surface of *Summer Blues* (1966). Iskowitz's fanciful, aerial cartography was confirmed for the artist during helicopter flights out of Churchill, Manitoba in 1967 and an exuberant confidence has characterized his memory-maps ever since. The monumental *Uplands* series (1970-1972) with its truncated leviathan forms floating improbably on a cushioned and indistinct horizon line suspends a gentle rhythm in bold and muted colours. In the *Uplands* paintings the few distinct forms float outside the gravitational pull. Later canvases intensify these same colour patches and catapult them with compelling velocity through a crowded and active gravitational field (*Newscape*, 1976) or attempt to constrain them with an over-painted and more neutral screen (*Night Greens D*, 1981). Iskowitz's recent memory is charged with the vibrancy of a bold and personal sense of colour.

If the exhibition is at all flawed, it is by that recurrent art historical imperative to demonstrate the emergence of an artist's style. The persuasive didactics of the Iskowitz retrospective, the rationalization of the work against post-modernist theory in the handsome catalogue², and even the sight lines created in the hanging of the show continually encourage the interpretation of each more recent work as a maturation of something only hinted at in its precedent. This inevitably evolutionary view can obscure the intrinsic merit of the individual work. And in an exhibition where the artist's early memory-scapes are as compelling as his recent landscapes are euphoric, each of Iskowitz's mind-maps charts its terrain with inherent conviction.

1. The exhibition, already shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, January 23-March 7, 1982, to the Art Gallery of Windsor, April 4-May 2; the Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, May 20-June 27; the London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario, July 9-August 22, will also travel to the Glenbow Museum, Calgary, November 1-December 12, and Canada House, London, U.K., February 23-March 22, 1983.
2. Burnett, David. *Iskowitz*. Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1982.

CHICAGO'S NAVY PIER EXHIBITION

By Warren SANDERSON

Chicago's third Annual International Art Exposition held from the 13th through the 18th of May at the huge Navy Pier facility on Lake Michigan was a resounding success. More than a hundred galleries, mostly of contemporary art, exhibited under one roof for thousands of people who came to see and, surprisingly often in this year of economic distress, also to buy. In only three years the Chicago Navy Pier show has vaulted into the forefront of the art world, leapfrogging the efforts of New York, Toronto, and other cities, to rival Basel's annual art fair.

A great many of the major galleries of almost every region of the United States were represented, as we might have expected while, beyond that, no less than three from England, four from France, three from Italy, two from Spain and six from West Germany ensured an interna-

tional presence. Familiar to the readers of *Vie des Arts* were, to mention only a few, the Galerie Maeght (New York and Paris), Marlborough (London and New York) featuring Fernando Botero's strangely pneumatic, larger than life-sized sculptures, New York's Robert Miller Gallery with especially the brilliant still lifes of Janet Fish and of Alice Neel, André Emmerich Gallery (New York) with a concentration upon the sculpture of Michael Steiner, the Leo Castelli Gallery (New York) with a marvelous painting by Sandro Chia outstanding among many others, Sidney Janis Gallery (New York) with recent works in plaster and in paper by George Segal among some few others, the Annina Nosei Gallery (New York) presenting New Wave figural work, and Joan Prats-Poligrafa Editions, the distinguished Spanish publisher of contemporary prints. Less familiar but just as deserving of mention were John Berggruen (San Francisco) with an impressive array of California painters, including some small and precious but beautifully painted recent cityscapes by Wayne Thiebaud of Pop fame; Galerie Alain Blondel of Paris exhibiting outstanding realists from Europe (Jean-Yves Le Boulenger, Claude Yvel, and Francine Van Hove); Jane Haslem (Washington, D.C.) with some huge paintings of John Winslow and recent oils by Gabor Peterdi; and the Hokin Gallery of Chicago with striking trompe-l'oeil variations upon abstract expressionist paintings by John Havard and others.

To stroll along the several aisles of the Navy Pier show was in effect to experience art that cut across commercial and national boundaries. With few exceptions there was little of nationalism expressed in dealers' choices, but

3. Jean-Michel BASQUIAT
Rice and Chicken, 1982.
Acrylic and oil on canvas.
172 cm x 213.5.



for the regional representations of Texas and to a lesser extent California. But strolling hardly describes the often pressurized sense of elbow to elbow, slow-motion movement of the mid-day and evening crowds. This was as much a public event, a matter of civic pride, as it was a place for dealers and collectors of all tastes to gather and talk shop.

Chicago demonstrated amply that, whether we agree or disagree with it, the major worldwide trend today is of a resurgent re-assimilation and reinterpretation of the pathways of figuration taken earlier in this century. And given the broad geographic scope of this movement—no surprise in this age of mass media—the level of quality achieved by so many is much more consistently high than we might have anticipated.

Paintings by some of the leading new international lights attracted a good deal of attention. From West Germany Georg Baselitz's strongly painterly, richly impastoed, upside-down figural work commanded much respect: it was a bold excursion into the art of painting in which representation *per se* was directly denied, and yet almost literally one could hardly mistake the representation. A.R. Penck, apostle of the decidedly unintentional, yet somehow symbolist (?) New Wave, showed his gingerbread men and out-of-scale parts of objects arrayed seemingly haphazardly against an uninteresting ground. From Italy Sandro Chia's painting of a reclining figure upon a sofa was more solid than dreamlike and its figural mode evoked comparison with the less interesting Fernando Botero's portentous larger-than-life sculptures. Chia is unquestionably the star of what Italian critic Achille Bonito Oliva has called the Italian trans-avantgarde. Works of other members of that group, also worth time and contemplation, by artists such as Francesco Clemente, Enzo Cucchi, and Mimmo Paladino, were also seen in Chicago. (They and more are arrayed in the Guggenheim Museum's exhibition of *Italian Painting Today*.)

Annina Nosei Gallery, one of the brighter promises of New York's Soho section, showed paintings that followed those of the Europeans I have already mentioned. Salomé's *Crazy Red*, a large (94 1/2 x 79") loosely painterly figural work is related to Baselitz's mode, while Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Untitled* goes beyond A.R. Penck to verge deliberately upon the edge of a reappraisal of the CoBRA group of the early 50's and bad painting. This introduces some serious problems that proceed beyond the bounds of this review.

To single out particular realists for discussion here is less important than the recognition of their predominant presence throughout the Navy Pier exhibition halls. Suffice it to mention that in addition to the now frequently seen Americans such as Chuck Close, Janet Fish (Robert Miller Galleries, N.Y.), Gregory Gillespie (Forum, N.Y.), Philip Pearlstein (Frumkin/Struve, Chicago), and Sidney Goodman (Terry Dintenfass, N.Y.), the works of lesser known artists—Ben Mahmoud (Zaks Gallery, Chicago), Michael Mazur (Janus Gallery, Los Angeles) and Donald Roller Wilson (Moody Gallery, Houston, Texas), for instance—though diverse were extraordinarily well composed and well painted; while there was also some strong competition from European realists of various persuasions, artists such as Jean-