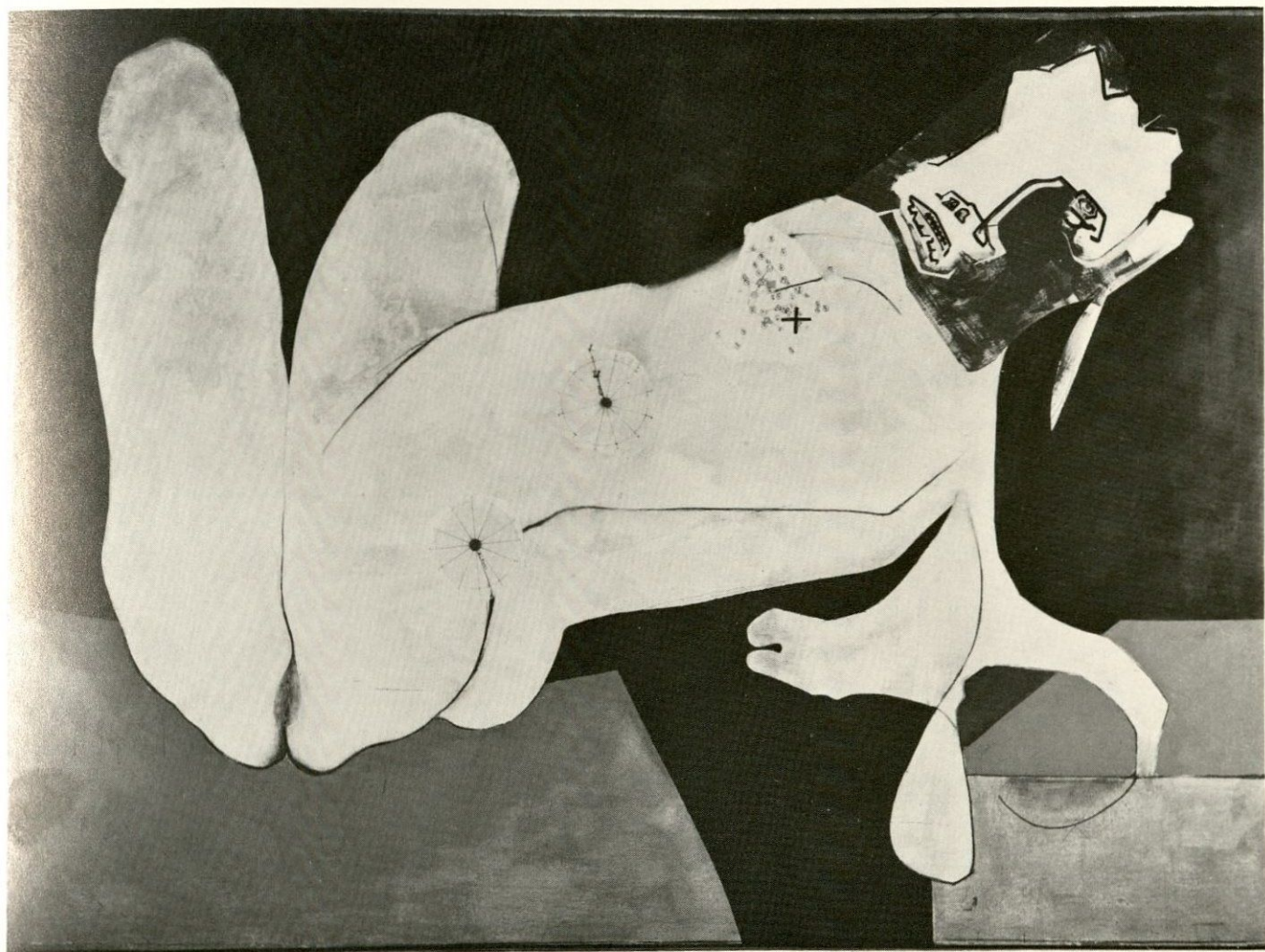


DAVID HARE

Cronus, Elephants, Flying Heads



Frontis piece:

Cronus Hermaphrodite 1970

Acrylic and collage on canvas 66 x 91

dimensions in inches, height precedes width;
all works collection of artist unless otherwise noted

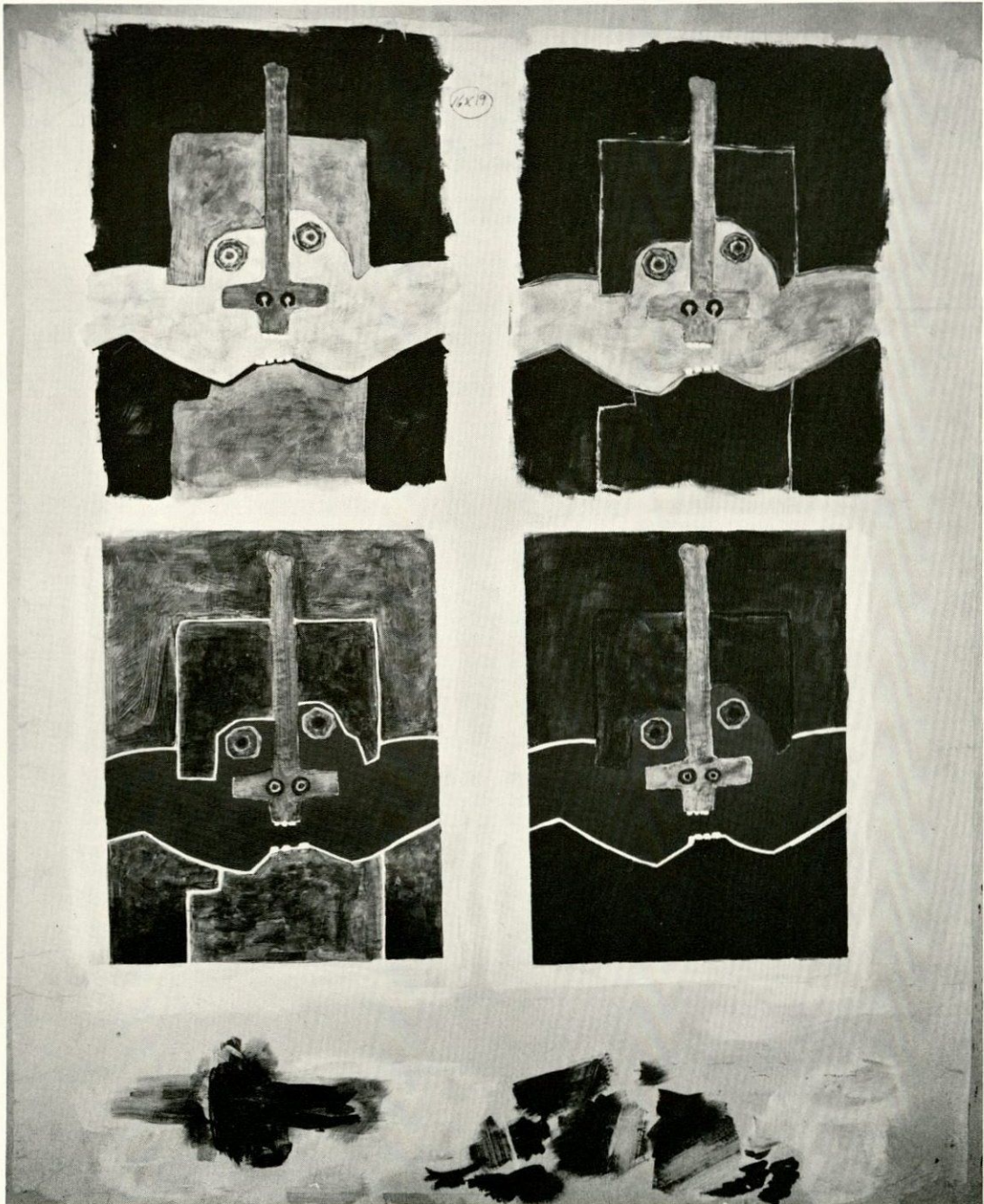
catalog design: Barbara Perkins

DAVID HARE

Cronus, Elephants, Flying Heads

November 18–December 16, 1983

University Art Gallery
State University of New York at Binghamton



God of Eyes 1975
Acrylic and collage on canvas 48 x 65

It is summertime, and I am in the country involved with horses, plants, weather, flies, repairs, and other small bits of reality. Different from art or working with art. I am supposed to write a short statement. At the moment very few things seem important, and of these art seems to be at the bottom of the list. I wonder how it could have occupied my mind and spirit in the way it did, in the way it will again.

Art in all its forms, and there are many, is never practical. Its quality is only peripheral to its acceptance. There is some work both popular and good – some only popular, some only good. The confusion comes from equating popularity and acceptance within the art scene as proof of quality within the work. The quality of the work and the acceptance of that work by the art scene are only peripherally connected. The art quality depends on the creative capacity of the artist. The acceptance depends largely on advertising and public relations.

This unfortunate situation has become continually more pronounced since early Abstract Expressionism. At that time, when American commercial hype was first applied to art, the intention was to make it possible for the artist to exist as a professional, but the result in the last few years has been to lower the standard of art. There are certainly as many talented artists as before. However, the present popularity of art has attracted an increasing number of people whose interests are more connected with hype than with art. Such work is to be seen in abundance at the Whitney Biennials, and they may often be recognized by a peculiar emanation of hysterical desperation and hurry. As a friend of mine said, "These artists are like white chocolate; peace treaties without the peace."

Mixed with these, one occasionally finds the real art which always appears as unsettling: which is hard to remember, which does not relate obviously to anything else, which appears full of contradictions, as if it had come recently out of chaos, at the same time standing secure and by itself. It is very likely to have a clumsiness about it which makes it genuine. These works look as if

they were meant to be what they are – not a cliché of something else. They do not make excuses; they do not point to tricks or timely considerations of art history; nor to assumed knowledge and understanding. They articulate object and idea as if for the first time. They exist outside of the individual. They take the observer a little way into that dense world of the unknown. "Reality and the dream are the same but one is permanent." A great work of art predicates the possibility of both reality and dream as permanent.

What is art? Almost anything you care to make that is free and as truthful as possible.

Who is the artist? One who is unaware that freedom is not allowed, but is aware that freedom and responsibility are interwoven.

What is the value of art? An insistence that freedom is possible and a necessary part of everything.

What is freedom? What every man wants, and it terrifies him.

Fundamental questions and unanswerable, but these answers are as good as any and better than many. The true artist is both loved and despised because he brings us what we want but cannot stand to have. Even so the Promethean as artist still exists.

I suppose I should try to say something informative about the works in this exhibition. To be truthful, I wasn't sure what they were when I made them, and I am still not. They were things I felt and wanted to do. Afterwards one begins to rationalize and explain. Artists like to explain what they do, even if they say they don't.

These works are from three different series. The first I call Cronus. The Titans were Gods who lived underground and were part human and part geological. Cronus was a Titan and the father of Zeus. He had twelve children and was told one of them would kill him, so he tried to eat all of them. Zeus escaped, grew up and did kill him.

Of course I take my own liberties with this myth. For me Cronus represents living in past, present, and future at the same moment. In that same moment he combines the earth itself (the an-

cient) with his life (the present) and with his death through patricide (the future). Does he destroy his future by eating his children? does he become the future by eating them? does Zeus become Cronus by killing him? does Cronus love his children, and is that why he eats them? is love for oneself or for another? If you see all time as taking place in the instant, are not love and destruction perhaps the same? does immortality become boring and repetitious? or is there perhaps no other choice? Neither questions nor answers are clear. However, I do know Cronus lived in a cave: he was part earth; you can see his hands rising in some of the paintings. I know he was once young and grew up, became old and wise and mad, descended into the earth again. I know he was both male and female, – both the inside and the outside. I know these things because that is the way he grew as I drew him. I don't know if after descending he came back up and repeated the whole thing, but I suppose he may well have.

Elephants are really fantastic creatures. It's not only their size; it's the complication of their forms. Not only their forms, but their whole orientation is antediluvian. That is, I see them as a link between us and our past, between us and the planet. They are like ropes which I hope may keep us connected to the earth. I worked on them after the works on Cronus. They have the same nose. Perhaps Cronus when he came back up was an elephant; it wouldn't surprise me. You might ask why I didn't paint horses or flowers. I might have, but I happen to like elephants a lot.

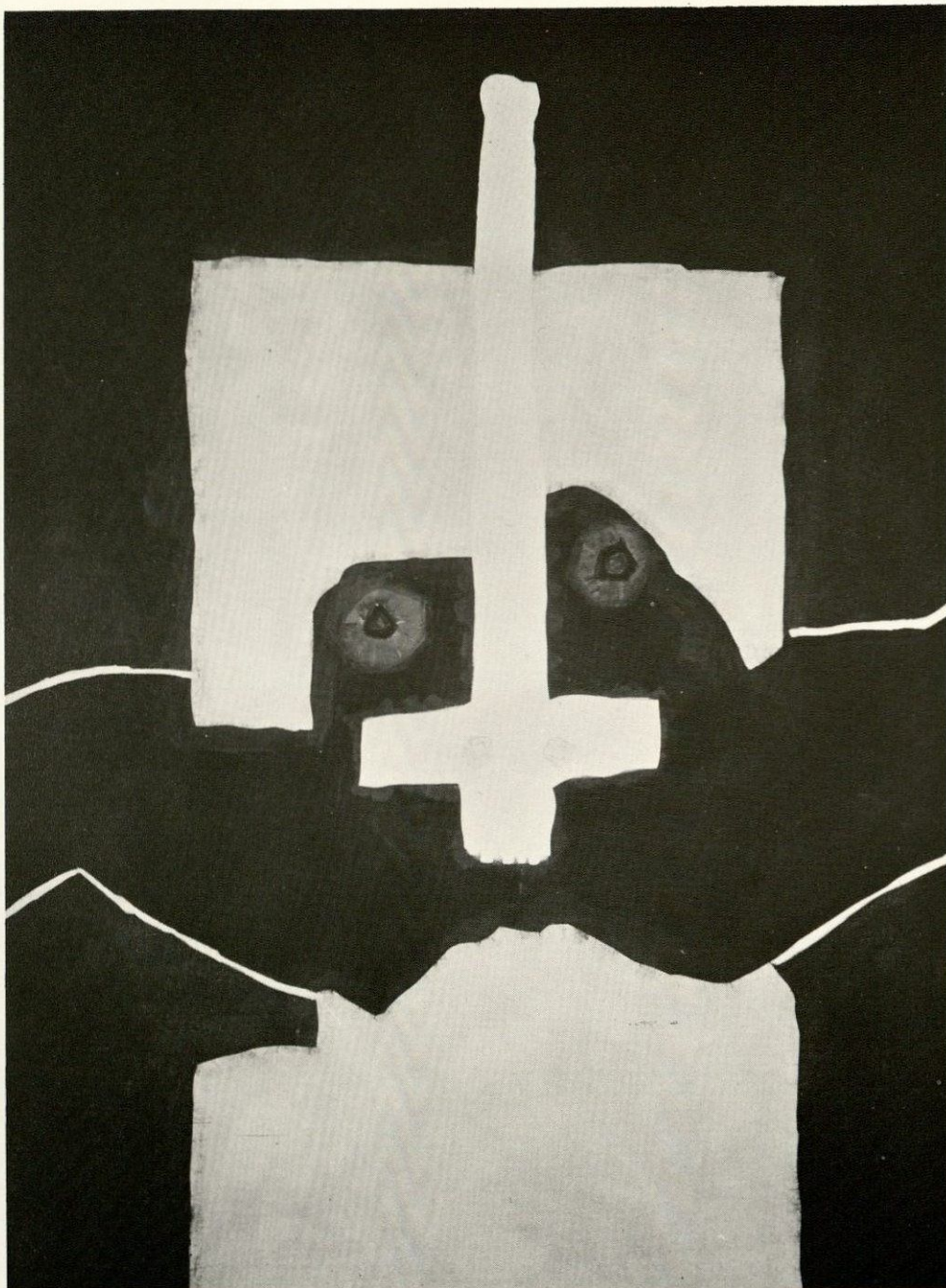
The flying heads are sort of companions. Not real companions, but spirits who accompany one at certain times, times of change, like puberty, adulthood, falling in love, growing old, dying. Things like that. They are part friendly and part not, depending on how one grows. They are you but another part of you and, of course, they are different for each person. Whether they are friendly or not, you can't grow without them. They stand just behind you and point in different directions. When you choose a direction, they follow grinning and sneering, but not helping except perhaps a little in emergencies. Primitive races

call them "bush souls" because that is what they are. Mine may not look gentle, and they are not, but I like them anyway.

There are also some drawings, but they are not a series, – just some nudes. Nudes are always nice.

I like drawings a lot. Drawings often show what one intended to do before one did or didn't do it. Drawing is sort of like playing the violin. If you don't do it all the time, you forget how. And of course it is the most abstract of art. It really only exists in your head.

David Hare
August 1983



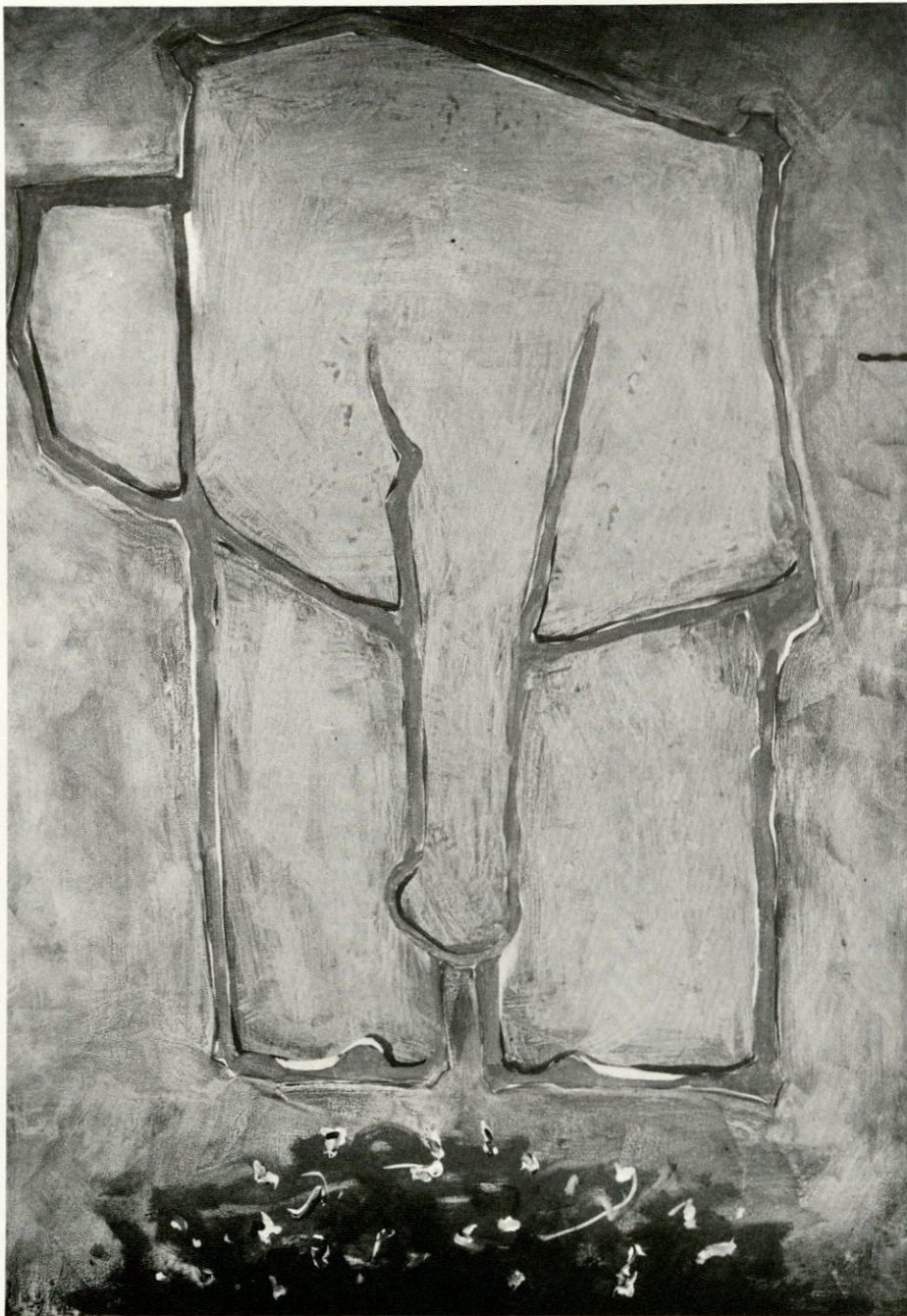
Cronus Descending 1968
Acrylic and collage on canvas 67 x 90



Cronus Elephant 1975
Acrylic and collage on canvas 60 x 84



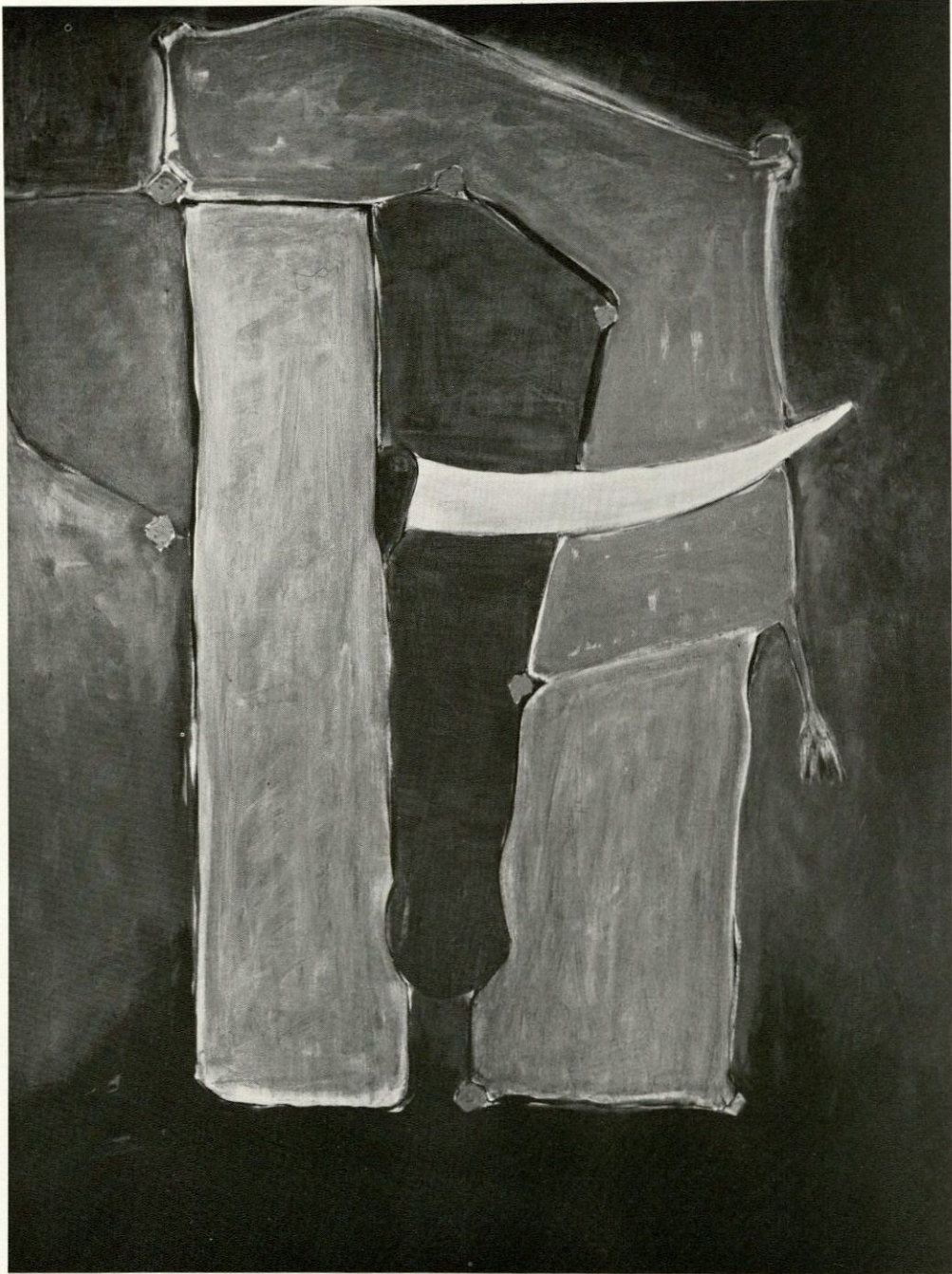
View from the Cave #1 1970
Acrylic and collage on canvas 39 x 68



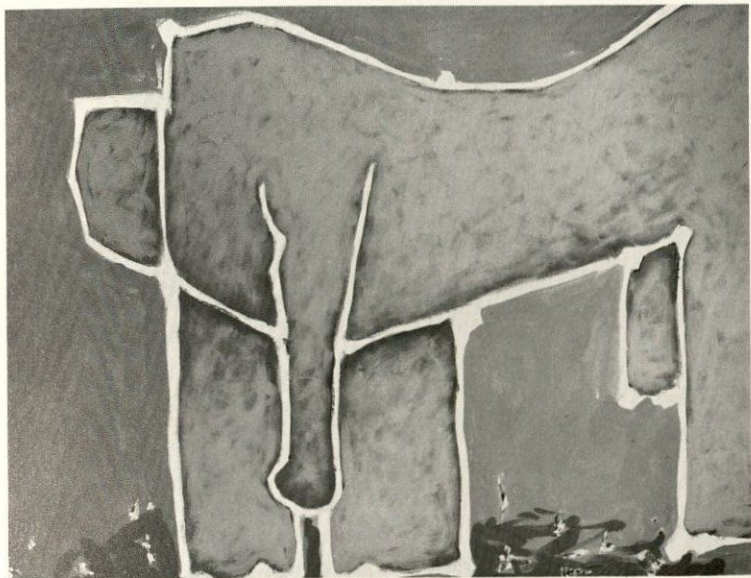
Elephant & Violets #3 1979
Acrylic and collage on canvas 44 x 63



Elephants & Violets #5 1979
Acrylic and collage 53 x 69



Elephant Puzzle 1979
Acrylic and collage on canvas 48 x 65



Elephant & Violets 1979
Acrylic on canvas 48 x 36
Collection of Sam Bowman



Dog Elephant 1979
Acrylic on canvas 82 x 68½



Flying Head #3 1979
Acrylic on canvas 90 x 66



Flying Head #2 1979
Acrylic and collage on board 34 x 39
Collection of Irving Newman

BIOGRAPHY

Born: New York City 1917

ONE-MAN EXHIBITIONS

- 1940 Julian Levy Gallery, New York City
- 1941 E. Weyhe
- 1944 – 46 Art of This Century, Peggy Guggenheim Gallery, New York City
- 1946 Julian Levy Gallery, New York City
- 1946 – 59 Samuel Kootz Gallery, New York City
- 1947 San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, Calif.
- 1948 Gallery Maeght, Paris
- 1949 Julian Levy Gallery, New York City
- 1960 – 63 Saitenberg Gallery, New York City
- 1965 Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans, La.
- 1969 Staempfli Gallery, New York City
- 1974 Tibor De Nagy Gallery, Houston, Texas
- 1976 Alessandra Gallery, New York City
- 1977 Guggenheim Museum, New York City

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1946 Fourteen Americans, Museum of Modern Art, New York City
- 1951 & 57 Biennale, Sao Paulo Museum, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 1955 Modern Art in the U.S., traveling Museum show throughout Europe
- 1955 New Decade, Whitney Museum, New York City
- 1956 International Exhibition of Contemporary Sculpture, Musee Rodin, Paris
- 1961 Chicago Institute of Fine Arts
- 1962 Seattle World's Fair Exhibition, Seattle, Washington
- 1962 Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 1962 Whitney Museum Sculpture and Drawing Exhibition, New York City
- 1968 Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage, Museum of Modern Art, New York City
- 1969 New American Painting and Sculpture: The First Generation, The Museum of Modern Art, New York City
- 1970 The Partial Figure, Baltimore Museum of Fine Arts, Baltimore, Md.

PUBLISHED WORKS

New York Surrealist Review VVV, 1942 – 44, ed. Andre Breton,
Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, David Hare
Statement in Catalogue Fourteen Americans, Museum of Modern Art, 1946
Art Journal, Fall 1973, On Robert Goldwater