



MIKLOS POGANY

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In My Own Hope's Care

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VICTORIA MUNROE
fine art

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cover: *I Dreamt I was a Cloud Over Clohe's House*, 2010, oil on canvas, 8 x 10 inches

*I dedicate this show to Clare, my grandchildren Klara Maklyn,
Amalia Rose, Elio, Ezra, and to Victoria.*

Miklos Pogany



San Gimignano - Santa Fina, 2011, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

Miklos Pogany's Acts of Commemoration

John Yau

Miklos Pogany is an artist living in the diaspora. The particulars of his diasporic situation help us understand his paintings, but don't explain them. He was born into a prominent Jewish family in Budapest in 1941, during World War II and the Holocaust, but did not learn that he was Jewish until he was in his 50s. At the end of World War II, in order to escape Hungary, which Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin had agreed would be part of the Soviet sphere of influence after the war, Pogany's family appealed to the Catholic church, which helped them immigrate to Italy, where they were placed in a camp for displaced persons in Rome. Pogany's grandfather had converted to Catholicism before the war, which, as Pogany told me:¹ "did help somewhat to protect the family from persecution from the Nazis."

As a child of six, who was displaced to Italy, he knew Hungarian, Russian, and German. Growing up in Rome, Milan, and finally in Moltrasio on Lake Como, Italian became his mother tongue, and he also learned French. He remembers doing "endless exercises in chiaroscuro in high school in Italy."² In that same email, Pogany wrote: "I believe that by living in Italy, as well as France and England, I was greatly influenced by the Italian paesaggios, and European sculpture, frescoes and architecture."

Pogany was in his teens when he moved to America to study. He became seriously interested in art while studying English and philosophy at St.

Procopius College, in Chicago, Illinois (in 1970, the college elected to change its name to Illinois Benedictine College). After getting his B.A., he went on to get a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Aesthetics from the University of Chicago (1972). During his years in graduate school he taught at various local universities as well as pursuing his interest in art. At this juncture in his life, all the outward signs pointed to the likelihood that he would embark upon a successful career as a university professor and make significant contributions in his field. Pogany, however, did not follow the course he worked so hard to set in motion. After being appointed to teach at Northwestern University, he quit his position in 1972, and moved to California, where he devoted himself to art. In other words, he did what many of us long to do but don't: he changed his life.

Even though Pogany's life is marked by extreme change, starting with moving from Budapest to Rome as a child and learning a whole new language, it did not make him afraid to embark on a path marked with uncertainty. During his first years in the Bay Area, he taught Italian literature at the New College, where the poets Robert Duncan and David Meltzer were on the faculty. He also began exploring the medium of monotype, which he was introduced to at 3EP Press Limited, founded by the collector Moo (Mary Margaret) Anderson, the artist Joseph Goldyne, and the dealer Paula Kirkeby. Historically speaking, in the early 1970s, the interest in monotype was new, inspired largely by a revelatory exhibition, *Degas Monotypes*, at the Fogg

Art Museum, Cambridge, MA (April 25, 1968–June 14, 1968), which was seen by Michael Mazur (1935–2009), who began exploring the medium almost immediately, as well as spreading the word.

Not connected to any art or literary scene, either in Chicago or the Bay Area, Pogany belongs to that group of sophisticated, self-educated artists in America that includes figures as diverse as Joseph Cornell, Robert Ryman, and Jasper Johns. In contrast to these artists, Pogany has never been associated with any group or stylistic tendency. He has pursued a path that is all his own, and that is what we should keep in mind when looking at his work.

I would like to further contextualize this observation. What further distinguishes Pogany's work from his contemporaries is the fact that he grew up in Italy, and experienced a different physical and cultural landscape than many of his American peers. He did not go to art school, but it would be wrong to think of him as an outsider artist because he received no formal art education. Moreover, as an artist who first gained attention in the early 1980s, when he was in his mid-30s, Pogany did not employ any of the stylistic tendencies associated with that hyperbolic era, which has been characterized as the "Return of Painting." Pogany was neither a Neo-Expressionist nor a Neo-Geo artist. I think the only way to see Pogany is as an independent artist who has always followed his own vision—one that speaks to our feelings in the face of fragility, solitude, and anxiety. This leads me to make one more observation about Pogany's work, which renders the discussion about the difference between abstraction and figuration moot. Rather than comfortably belonging in either category, his

work occupies both. This inability to place his art in any of the categories we are accustomed to applying to an artist's work is consistent with what I believe is his sense of the diaspora; it is not a collective experience, but an individual one.

Made over a span of four decades (1982 – 2022), the works in the exhibition convey the breadth of Pogany's approach to materials, methods, and subject matter. They include paintings, monotypes, etchings, many of them hand-colored. As an artist who has often worked with an enigmatic and allusive motif, monotype seems a perfect fit, as you make only one example rather than an edition. By using monotype, Pogany can go back to the motif to both rethink and see it anew. His engagement with a motif is one of the currents running throughout his work, starting in the early 1970s. In his acclaimed series *Klarika* (1972 –), Pogany articulated a highly mediated abstract form, which alludes to an enigmatic figural presence. The enigma is due to the fact that although the image clearly represents someone, it is impossible to say whom. The essence of *Klarika's* abstract form is standoffish, angular, sensual, sturdy, and ghostly. It is physical and ethereal, palpable and elusive. Pogany's form stirs up unexpected associations, as in the moody "First Memory of Tahiti" (1985). This unlikely synthesis of the physical and ethereal is true of all of the motifs that Pogany has explored during his career.

Seeing these works gathered together, I am struck by something that I had not fully considered when I first wrote about Pogany's work in 1985 and again in '86; his attention to scale. I know from writing previously about his work that he has made works that are more than 6 feet high and 4 feet wide. At that time, what I did not see clearly enough to

¹ email dated June 23, 2022.

² email dated June 17, 2022.

call attention to is that the work's physical scale was determined by the extent of one's physical grasp. That measure is one of his guides. He does not seem the least bit interested in continuing the legacy of monumental scale that his generation inherited from the Abstract Expressionists and the Minimalists, and has become a commonplace marker of an artist's seriousness. I suspect this is because Pogany recognizes that working on a large scale has devolved into a celebration of material wealth.

With their combination of post-and-lintel structures, attenuated triangles, rectangles, lines, scimitar-like arcs, and French curves, Pogany's motifs seem to have been inspired by European architecture, the geometric compositions of Piero della Francesca, the diagonal dynamics of Russian Constructivists, and the serial abstraction of Richard Diebenkorn. Color is used to evoke a season, a place, a surface, or a specific kind of light.

An artist whose work often alludes to memories of places he has seen and lived in, Pogany's interest lies in what traces of our experience remain with us. With collective and individual titles such as "Acoma," "Walpi," "Kawestima," and "Mimbres," one loosely related group of etchings derive their titles from Hopi and Navaho pueblos, and the prehistoric Northern American people of the Mogollon culture, who settled in what is present day New Mexico. The pink, turquoise, and ocher tones convey the color and light of these isolated settlements. In other works, Pogany's titles refer to medieval cities, towns, and sites in the regions of Tuscany and Veneto. As much as these two bodies of work are about places the artist has experienced, they are also about time and change, what persists and what dissipates.

When I consider the three bone-white shapes in the painting *Floating Homes by the Arsenale*, 2011, what am I to make of the tension between the houses' flat facades and the fact that they are windowless? While the formalist emphasis on flatness and painting's two-dimensional surface has long been considered central to postwar abstract art, Pogany's depiction of the three buildings does not strike me as a purely aesthetic decision. The attention he pays to placement, color, contour, and their distinct shapes comes from some deep place of feeling in the artist. Look at the color of the sky in *Floating Homes by the Arsenale*, and the spaces separating the houses, and a feeling of solitariness inflected with foreboding becomes evident. And yet, nothing is spelled out. The painting remains mysterious.

Through his synthesis of linear structure and nuanced color, Pogany is able to evoke fleeting states of intense feeling, those poignant states of recollection that remain with us long after the moment has passed. In works such as the hand-colored monotype *Iris pour Mondrian* (1994) and the monotype *Iris from Torcello (2)* (1995), he calls out to art and place, while contemplating delicate and vulnerable reminders of the impermanence of material beauty.

The muted colors of *Iris from Torcello (2)* seem to be fading before us, underscoring the transitoriness of life. Instead of expressing sorrow over this inescapable state, Pogany invites the viewer to reflect upon this condition without looking away, and to celebrate. Despite his lifelong feelings of loss and displacement, he infuses his commemorations with feelings that approach joy.



Floating Homes by the Arsenale, 2011, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Sunrise Over Capalbio, 2011 oil on canvas, 8 x 8 inches



Landscape on the Giudecca, 2011, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Dreams and Reflections, 2011, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches



San Gimignano, 2011, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches



Santa Maria della Salute, 2010, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



It's Not Good to Regret, 2010, oil on canvas, 10 x 8 inches



In My Own Hope's Care, 2010, oil on canvas, 8 x 10 inches



The House of Feathers, 2010, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches



Trying to Describe a Dream, 1989, monotype, mixed media, 17 x 12 inches



Requiem for the Fisherman (22), 1982, monotype, 13 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches



Requiem for the Fisherman (5), 1981, monotype, mixed media, 13 1/2 x 14 1/2 inches



Talpa (5), 1983, etching with watercolor, 8 x 4 inches



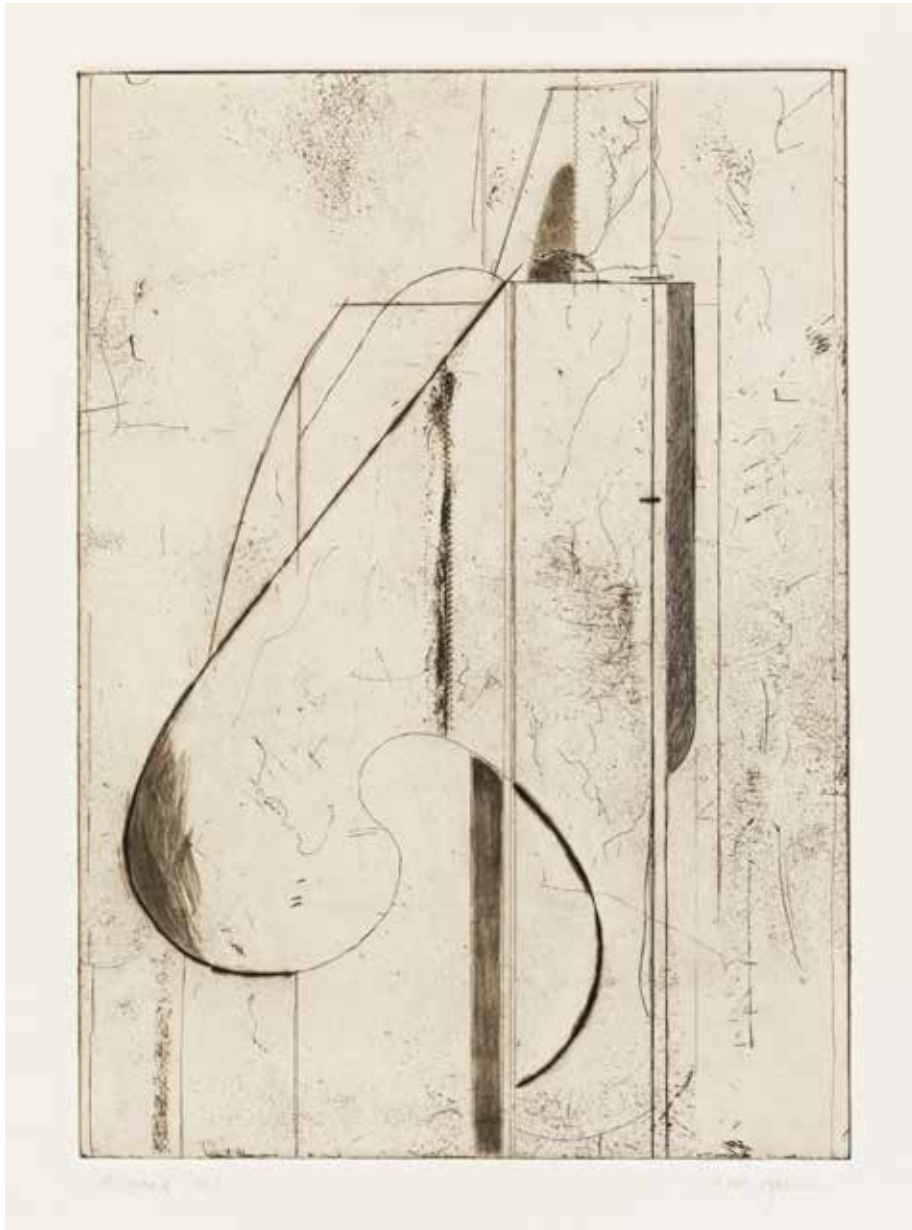
First Memory of Tahiti, 1985, monotype, mixed media, 12 x 12 inches



Mimbres (1), 1983, etching with watercolor, 8 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches



Mimbres (2), 1983, etching with watercolor, 8 1/2 x 7 3/4 inches



Acoma (2), 1982, etching, 9 1/2 x 6 3/4 inches



My Favorite, 1997, etching, mixed media, 4 x 3 inches



Tremors of Mortality, 1983, etching with watercolor, 9 1/2 x 7 inches



Topo (2), 1982, etching, 8 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches



Finally Henry's Fish, 2022, etching, mixed media, 9 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches



The Return, 2022, etching, mixed media, 9 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches



No Regrets, 2022, etching, mixed media, 7 x 4 inches



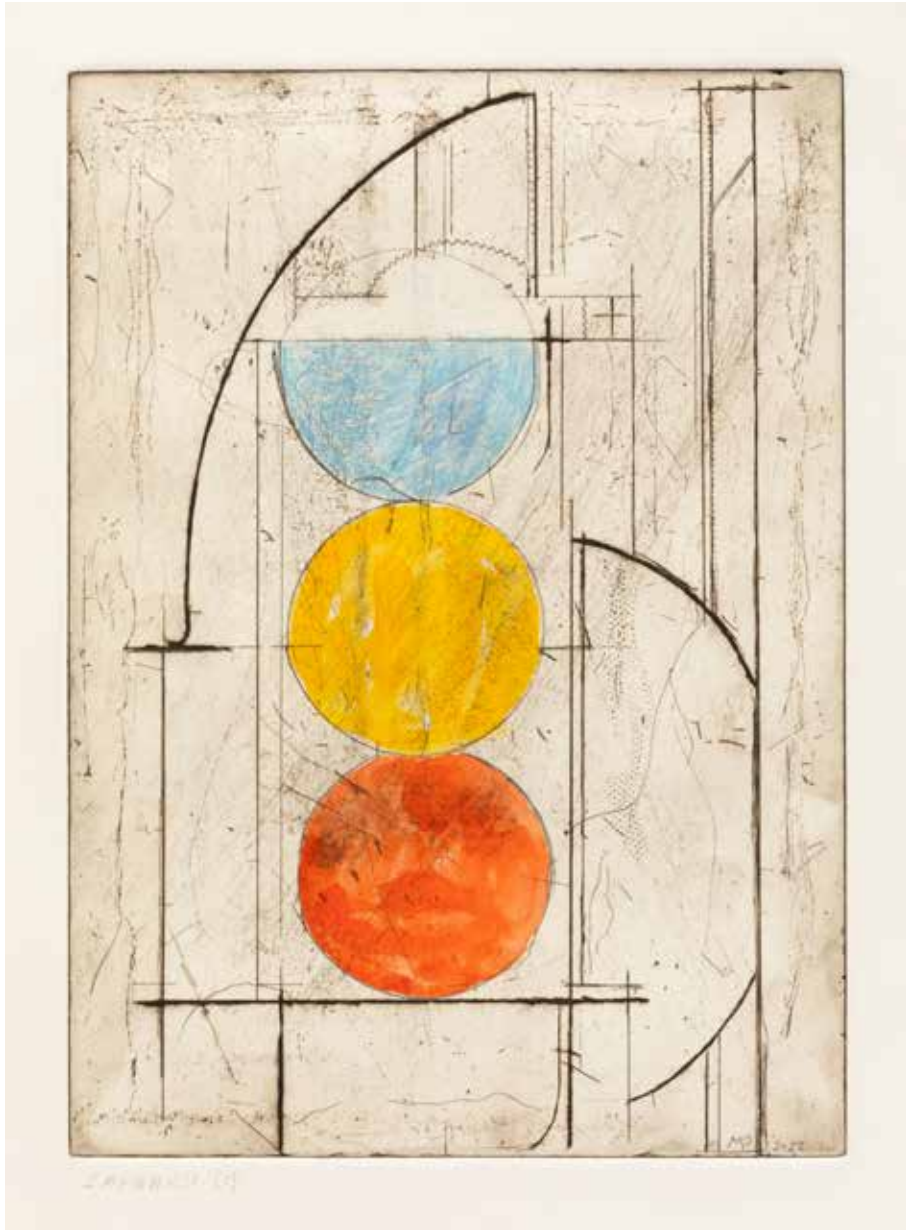
Hope, 2022, etching, mixed media, 8 ³/₄ x 5 ³/₄ inches



Walpi (VI), 1983, etching with watercolor, 7 x 4 inches



My Brother's Keeper, 1983, monotype, mixed media, 16 1/2 x 12 inches



Sangaku (I), 2022, etching, mixed media, 9 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches



Tremors of Immortality, 1983/2022, etching, mixed media, 9 1/2 x 6 3/4 inches



La Porte de tes Yeux (I) (Iris), 1994, monotype,
mixed media, 24 x 8 inches



Iris pour Klara Maklin, 1994, monotype,
23 1/2 x 8 inches



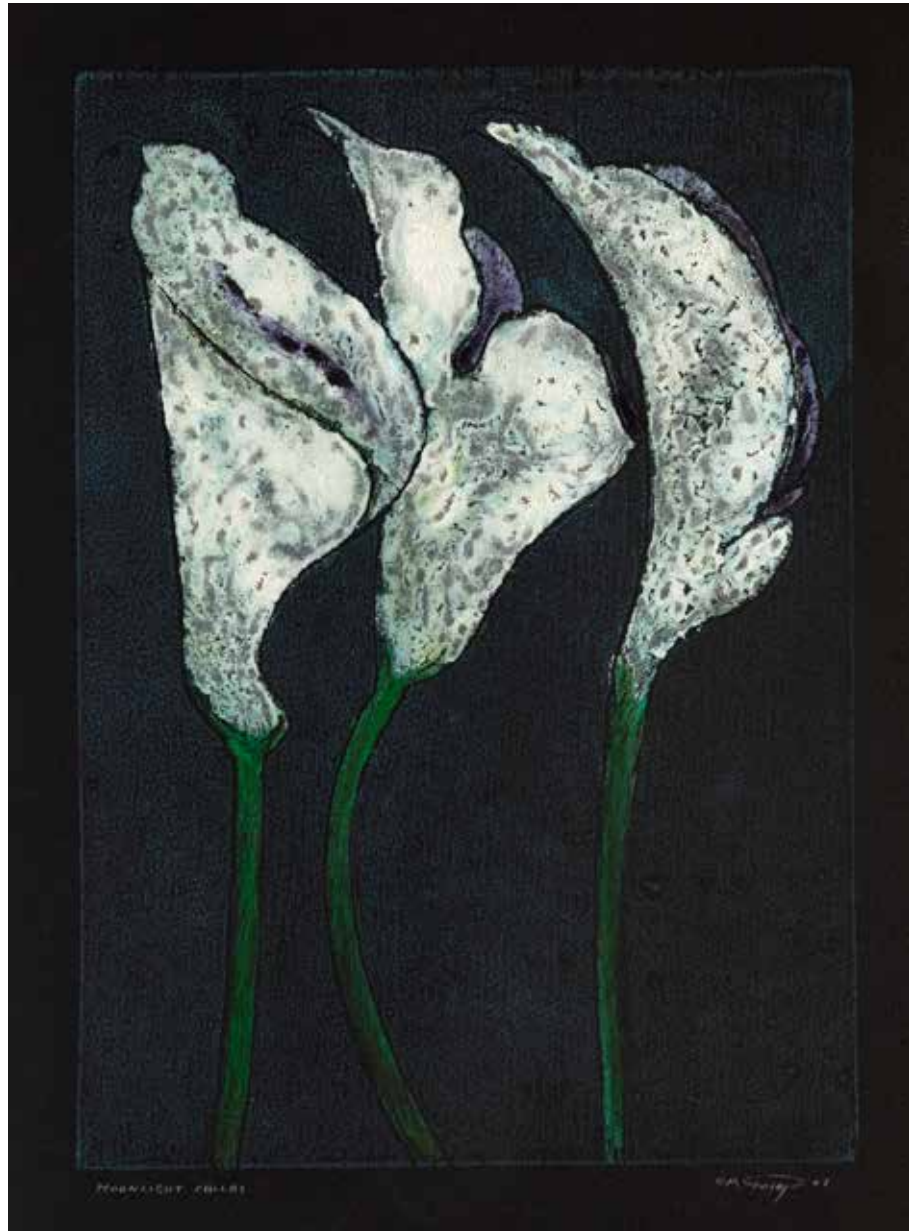
Morgan Illuminata pour Klara Mack (Iris), 1996, monotype, 17 x 13 inches



Iris from Torcello (1), 1994, monotype, 16 ³/₄ x 13 inches



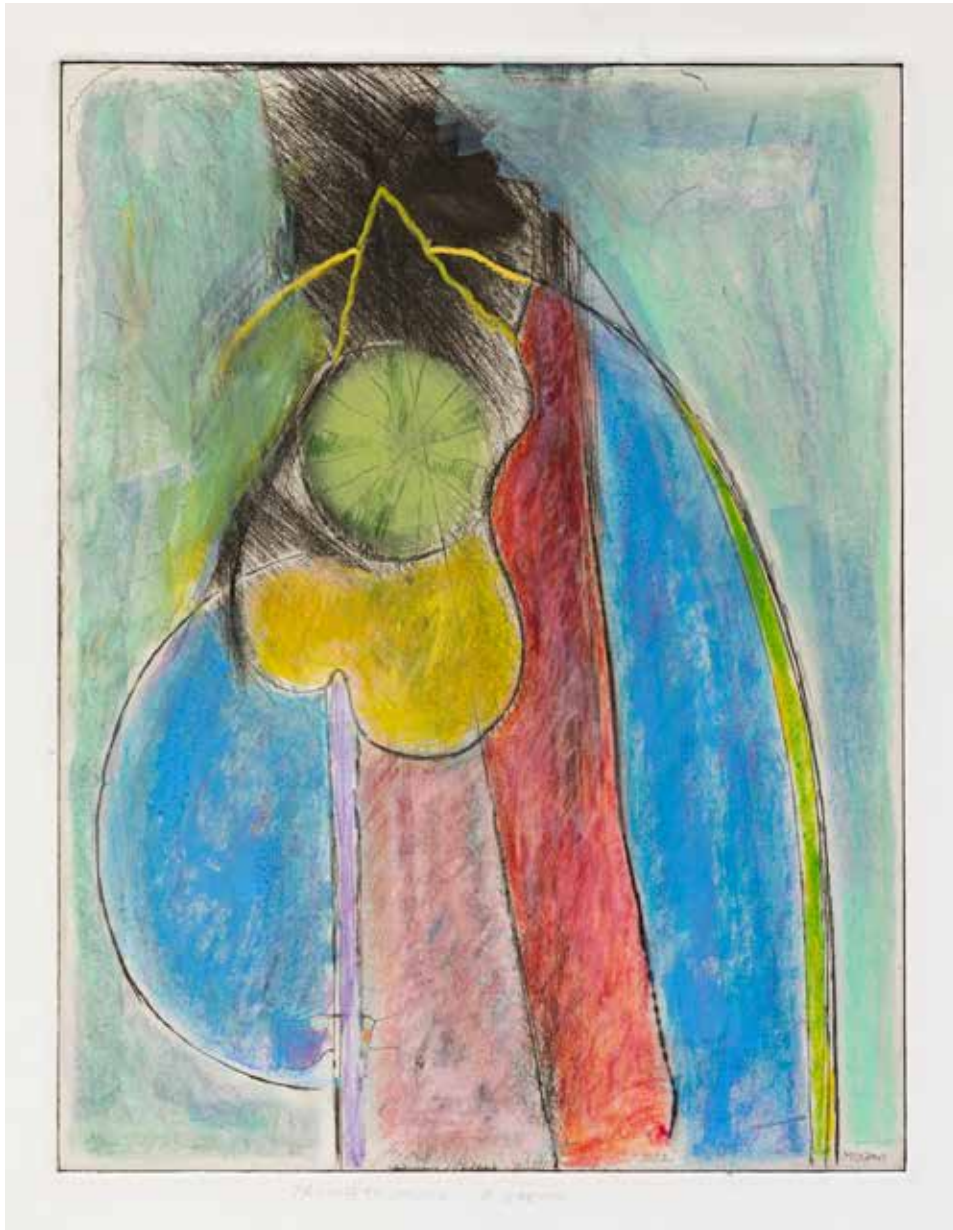
Iris from Torcello (2), 1995, monotype, 16 ³/₄ x 13 inches



Moonlight Callas, 2008, monotype, mixed media, 17 x 12 inches



Callas from Arles, 1994, monotype, mixed media, 17 x 12 inches



Trying to Explain a Dream, 2022, etching, mixed media, 11 3/4 x 9 inches

I hope that my paintings and monoprints inspire thoughts or memories for you. It could be: "that composition reminds me of my childhood," or... "I've been there; I'd forgotten how beautiful those buildings were." Or "I can't tell you why, but that image draws me in, those colors speak to me, they make me happy." The connections happen at many levels.

So this is why I make art. It is my way of seeing and then hoping to share that vision with you.

In this show there are both paintings on canvas and works on paper - singular prints, or monotypes, and hand-colored etchings.

The paintings were inspired by living in Italy. I was born in Budapest but at the age of six or seven I went to live in Italy, in Venice, Rome, Milan and then on Lake Como. The images you see were left in my mind and touched my soul with their personalities, their shapes, their colors, the material used to build them.

The towers in San Gimignano in Italy are unique and unforgettable in their shapes. These buildings make themselves noticed. Some whisper their presence, as if trying to explain their history. Who lived there one hundred years ago, what happened in those rooms, why are they empty or who lives there now? Others still proudly exhibit their presence: "Look how beautiful, elegant and mysterious I am. I have seen centuries of happenings. Come inside and I will tell you a tale or two."

Some of the etchings in this show were inspired by Native American art and design, as you might guess from titles like 'Mimbres,' 'Acoma,' and 'Walpi.' But as I work with them they develop in different directions: the etchings provide just a base, a beginning; they evoke variations and offer possibilities. Some of the newer works are influenced by Japanese Sangaku, paintings based on geometrical problems or theorems, and offered to the spirits for protection in Japanese temples and places of business. They are sometimes vivacious and playful, sometimes unfathomable and complicated.

In all these hand-colored works on paper I go from one to another as I listen to the suggestions they give me until they tell me to move on. It is a conversation with color, composition, perspective, mystery, until an image develops and tells me: "Leave me alone. I am done."

If you have read thus far I hope to have engaged you in a conversation with my shapes, my choice of colors, the way I form images with different media and how I mirror some of the ways I see the world around me.

Miklos Pogany, June 2022

MIKLOS POGANY

Born 1941, Budapest, Hungary; lives and works in Portland, Maine.

EDUCATION

1972	Ph.D. University of Chicago, Comparative Literature/Aesthetics
1965	M.A. University of Chicago, Comparative Literature/Aesthetics
1964	B.A. St. Procopius College, Illinois, English/Philosophy

SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2022	Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY
2019	Danese Corey, New York, NY
2015	Fort Point Arts Community, Boston, MA
2012	Fort Point Arts Community, Boston, MA
2008	Harvard University Owl Club, Cambridge, MA
2004	Kantar Fine Arts, Newtonville, MA
1998	J. Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, ME
1996	Museum Vasarely, Budapest, Hungary
1994	Galerie Queyras, Paris, France Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT
1993	Erector Square Gallery, New Haven, CT
1992	Inner Space Gallery, New Haven, CT
1991	Associated American Artists, New York, NY Kurtz Bingham Gallery, Memphis, TN Cummings Art Center, Connecticut College, New London, CT
1990	Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT
1989	Associated American Artists, New York, NY Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT
1988	Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington, DC Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY Monotype Guild of America & the Glyde Gallery, Mosman Park, Western Australia Connecticut Gallery, Marlborough, CT
1987	Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington DC
1986	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY

	Galerie Munsterberg, Basel, Switzerland
1985	The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC
1984	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY Connecticut Gallery, Marlborough, CT Weintraub Gallery, New York, NY
1983	Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA Paul Mellon Art Center, Wallingford, CT Hurlbutt Gallery, Greenwich, CT 59th Annual International Competition, The Print Club, Philadelphia, PA
1982	Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT Smith Anderson Gallery, Palo Alto, CA Impressions Gallery, New York, NY
1981	Atrium Gallery, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT Impressions Gallery, Boston MA
1980	Urbach Gallery, New Haven, CT
1978	Market Hours Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1977	Gallery Paul Anglim, San Francisco, CA
1976	Triangle Gallery, San Francisco, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2020	Jewish Museum Pop-Up Show, Portland, ME
2019	Cove Street Arts, Portland, ME
2015	Gallery at 249 A, Boston, MA Open Studios Group Show, Fort Point Arts Community, Boston, MA
2014	Open Studios Group Show, Fort Point Arts Community, Boston, MA
2010	Victoria Munroe Fine Art, Boston, MA J. Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, ME
2006	North Haven Gallery, North Haven, ME
2005	Victoria Munroe Fine Art, Boston, MA
2003	Erlich Gallery, Marblehead, MA John Szoke Gallery, New York, NY

	Bernie Cohen Gallery, Kansas City, KS
1998	Islesford Dock Gallery, Little Cranberry Island, ME
1997	J. Leighton Gallery, Blue Hill, ME
1995	Westport Art Center, Westport, CT 100 Pearl Street Gallery, Hartford, CT
1994	Paesaggio Gallery, Canton, CT
1993	Galerie de L'Arcade, Paris, France Galerie Queyras, Paris, France R. Graphics, Paris, France Art Curial, Paris, France Atelier W. G., Amsterdam, The Netherlands Associated American Artists, New York, NY Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, IN
1992	Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT
1991	Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT Associated American Artists, New York, NY
1990	Silvermine Gallery, New Canaan, CT At Sigma Gallery, New York, NY Monoprint Guild of New England, The Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA The Connecticut Gallery, Marlborough, CT The Monoprint Guild of New England, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, MA Arnold Gallery, Newport, RI Sylvan Cole Gallery, New York, NY
1989	Erector Square Gallery, New Haven, CT The Bruce Museum, Greenwich, CT Associated American Artists, New York, NY Munson Gallery, New York, NY
1988	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY Stanford University Museum, CA The Connecticut Museum, Marlborough, CT
1987	New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS The Connecticut Gallery, Marlborough, CT
1986	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington, DC
1985	Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY The Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA

	Marsha Mateyka Gallery, Washington, DC Mony's Collection of Contemporary Prints, Purchase, NY
	The Achenbach Foundation, San Francisco, CA
1984	Lillian Heidenberg Gallery, New York, NY Schoarie County Arts Council, New York, NY Helen Lindhurst Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY National Small Print and Drawing Show, Cobblekill, NY Weintraub Gallery, New York, NY
1983	23rd National Print Exhibition, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA
1982	Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA
1981	Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT Smith Anderson Gallery, Palo Alto, CA Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA Rockford College, Rockford, IL
1980	Munson Gallery, New Haven, CT Impressions Gallery, Boston, MA
1977	SECA Award Show, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA

TEACHING POSITIONS

1995-2014	Painting, Drawing & Printmaking, Buckingham Browne & Nichols School, Cambridge, MA
1980-1981	Adjunct Lecturer, Southern Connecticut State College, CT
1976-1978	Adjunct Professor, San Francisco Art Institute, CA
1974-1978	Adjunct Associate Professor, San Francisco State University, CA
1972-1973	Assistant Professor, New College of California, Sausalito, CA
1968-1972	Instructor, Northwestern University, Evanston IL
1967-1968	Instructor, Loyola University, Chicago, IL
1967-1968	Lecturer, University of Chicago, IL

SELECTED AWARDS

The Connecticut Vision, Mattatuck Museum Prize
1990 Prints International, Silvermine Galleries, CT
Rockerfeller Foundation Grant, Bellagio, Italy
International Graphic Arts Foundation, Sigma Gallery, New York
Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award
Connecticut Commission for the Arts
SECA Award for Painting, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

SELECTED PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Lois and Michael Torf Collection, Boston, MA
Harvey Littleton Collection, Greenville, NC
The Anderson Collection, San Francisco, CA
Constance and William Kantar Collection, Newton, MA
Nancy and Rudolph Talbot Collection, Boston, MA

SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

E.F. Hutton, New York, NY
MONY, Purchase, NY
3 EP Ltd., Palo Alto, CA
Bank of America, San Francisco, CA
Spencer & Scott, Boston, MA
Mobil Oil, New York, NY
Chemical Bank, New York, NY
Christian Science Center, Boston, MA
AT&T, New York, NY
Biogen, Boston, MA
Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, New York, NY
R.J. Reynolds Industries, New York, NY and Denver, CO
Salomon Brothers, New York, NY
Zayre Corporation, Framingham, MA
Huntington Bank, Columbus, OH
Wichita Industries, Denver, CO and New York, NY
Pepsico World Headquarters, Purchase, NY

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Phillips Collection, Washington DC
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute,
Washington DC
Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Bibliothèque National, Paris, France
New York Public Library Print Collection, New York, NY
Boston Public Library Print Collection, Boston, MA
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
Achenbach Foundation for the Graphic Arts, San Francisco, CA
Davidson Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT
Harvey Littleton, Greenville, NC
Western Carolina University Fine Arts Museum
Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers State
University, NJ
Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT
Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS
Snite Museum, University of Notre Dame, IN
Connecticut Artists Collection, CT Commission on the Arts

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