



Jonathan Silver: Matter and Vision

Plaster, Bronze & Drawing

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VICTORIA MUNROE FINE ART

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On the Edge of the Visible: The Drawings of Jonathan Silver

Michael Brenson

The essay originally appeared in the catalogue for “Jonathan Silver: Drawings and Heads” an exhibition at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting & Sculpture, December 10, 2018 to January 20, 2019.

We are grateful to the Jonathan and Barbara Silver Foundation for the loan of this exhibition.

JONATHAN SILVER described the orthodox Jewish home in which he grew up in 1940s and '50s Brooklyn as accomplished, sophisticated, and miasmatic. His mother, Regina Bublick, a direct descendent of the famous rabbi Elijah of Vilna, read Shakespeare and Milton to Sarah, David, and Jonathan, her three children, and with Jonathan, the youngest, listened, transported, to Beethoven sonatas. Jonathan's father, Edward S. Silver, a lawyer who rose from chief assistant Brooklyn District Attorney in 1946 to Brooklyn District Attorney in 1954, liked the company of his son on visit to museums. When, as a delegate to the 1948 Zionist congress in Switzerland, his father took the family to Europe, his mother introduced Jonathan to the Louvre, where, she later told him, she could not tear him away from the sculpture. Silver described himself as an engaging kid, quick, smart, and personable, someone his father liked being seen with. He played piano, studied with composers, and pored through images of sculpture in his parents' books. Sculpture gave him “a feeling of reality and romance.” When he read about his early heroes, like Julius Caesar, Enrico Caruso, and Beethoven, his inclination was to model a tributary bust; he made his first busts of Beethoven when he was a child.

But if home was a place in which he was encouraged to feel an affinity with literature, music, and art, and to believe “in the unity and continuity of the Jewish people and their destiny,” it was also a place of psychological irresolution, parental conflict, and grandiose ambition. While confident and precocious in some ways, Silver was “crippled” in others. School “terrified” him. “I had trouble getting along with schoolmates. . . . I couldn't do my schoolwork properly.” At 13, on the day it was determined that he “was not going to go to school, that there would be some form of home instruction for me . . . I sat down at the kitchen table in this big house we had . . . with a book of Michelangelo drawings and a drawing pad, and copied them. I would say that that day was one of the happiest days of my life.”

When speaking about drawing, Silver often used the word “pleasure.” Drawing was private and quiet. It was a way to both fantasize and think, zero in and let his mind go. He drew in museums, including the Met and the Museum of Natural History. He drew at home and in his studio; in the last decade of his life, his home was in his studio. Populated with plaster heads and figures, many of which seemed suspended between completion and ruin, covered with plas-

ter dust, its rickety shelves crammed with plaster and rubber molds, his studio had an immersive and overrun materiality that recalled the iconic modernist studios of Rodin and Giacometti. He drew in his New York Studio School sculpture classes as well, in the corner, by his easel, while his students drew from the model. His drawings are clearly related to his sculptures in their attention to structure, volume, and light, and in the questions they pose about the human body and head. In his drawings, as in his sculptures, Silver created intense exchanges between authority and transgression, coherence and disintegration. He was obsessed with “wounded power.”

But even as his sculptural figures grew more extravagant, his drawings remained inward. His sculptures are commanding. Many were brought into existence not just by deliberation but also through gestures of attack. They assert connections with the history of sculpture, from ancient Egypt and Hellenistic Greece through Picasso and Giacometti. In Silver's drawings, on the other hand, the boldness is restrained, the gestures discreet. Their art-historical inspirations, from Cézanne, the Cubists, and Giacometti to Goya, Daumier, and Klee, lead more into painting than sculpture. His drawings don't seem to have been made for a public, although Silver was heartened when friends liked them. In the months prior to his death in July 1992, from cancer, at 54, he was grateful that the dealer Victoria Munroe put them in a show. When people expressed admiration for his drawings, for him it was as if they were acknowledging the value of his internal conversations, the worthiness of his intimate relationship with himself.

After nearly a decade of taking extension courses in music (“I was going to be a great pianist”) and being tutored at home, in 1959, at the age of 22, Silver entered Columbia University's School of General Studies. As a music composition major, he began taking art history courses. Meyer Schapiro, the charismatic teacher and legendary scholar of medieval and modern art, became a mentor. “What Schapiro had,” Silver said, was

a vivid sense of the metaphorical power of art, [expressed] through brilliant and poetic language. He had a way of [making] very value-charged physical descriptions. He described the brushstrokes of a work [and] informed that description with a moral intent on the part of the artist. . . . Everything he described, by virtue of that description, took

Photography: Jenny Gorman
Design: Lawrence Sunden, Inc.
Printing: The Studley Press

on a meaning, in relationship to a whole personality. That's just an extraordinary gift. And he loved art.

Schapiro recognized in Silver an originality and intellect that other Columbia art historians missed, and he was not pedantic about academic rules: he did not penalize Silver for spending a year writing a ten-page paper on Monet for his Impressionism class. On the contrary, he gave it an A, a higher grade than Silver received in courses stressing iconography and connoisseurship. It was for Schapiro that Silver wrote a master's thesis on Constantin Guys and began work on a PhD dissertation on Giacometti's paintings. Schapiro suggested that he consider those paintings in relation to Analytic Cubism, which Silver went on to study as thoroughly as any other postwar artist has studied any art-historical development.

Peter Agostini, who had begun to gain a reputation as an Abstract Expressionist sculptor, was also teaching at Columbia. As an art historian, Silver decided that "it made sense to take a drawing class and get a little practical, instinctive understanding of it." The "incalculable value" of the class, Silver said, lay in Agostini's ability to address his "overweening ambitions for high expression."

I was all involved in expressive distortions, and all that stuff. And he didn't pay any attention to me. . . . I couldn't stand it. One day I said to him, "Hey, how come you never look at my work?" He said, "What am I going to say? It's lousy." I said, "What do you mean?" "Well, you're not looking at the model. . . . You're not addressing the issue. You're not trying to do what's in front of you to do. You're busy with something going on in your own head."

So at that point I had the choice of saying, "Fuck you," and walking out of his class, or thinking over what he had to say. . . . I finally figured, "Well, maybe the guy's got something." And I began to look at the model and try very hard to get the most volumetric representation of the figure I could, through the use of line. I was good at it. I could do it. I had an instinctive gift for the realization of space in this way. And I began to find I could lose my self-consciousness in an outward attention to the object.

In the mid- to late '60s, Agostini brought Silver and Bruce Gagnier, another former student of his, to teach at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Silver and Gagnier drew together from the model. "I just look back at that time and that un-self-conscious belief in the value of drawing from observation, and doing it all the time from the model, and going to the museum. It was so much fun. It was so innocent, in a certain way. And true. . . . That idea of mastering the sensual impact of the human figure, in terms of relationships, and creating an illusion of a volume at the same time you were doing it, was an endlessly fascinating thing for me."

The drawings of heads, still lifes, and figures that are the earliest works in this show have a taut precariousness that makes them more compelling than the standard academic exercises their subjects and style suggest. The force of concentration defining the back and forth between Silver's eye and hand, and the model or still life, contributes to the persuasiveness of the result. The scale of the imagery depends largely on the traditional academic practice of holding thumb and pencil at arm's length to gauge the size and distance of the model. The images in the drawings can be small, even tiny, embedded in a thick spatial immensity in which the image is managing, for the moment, to hold on. "People were horrified by the smallness" of the images they drew in Agostini's class, Silver recalled. "Other teachers would come and say, 'How can you?' . . . They laughed, because they're concerned with the whole question of *the page*. . . . When the drawing really works it does generate the space around it. . . . So it could be very alive, and still just be a little, tiny thing on the page, just in the right place on the page."

When Silver became obsessed with Analytic Cubism, his drawing changed, his sculpture became a field of adventurous and even wild research, his drawing and sculpture became interdependent, and although he would write reviews for *Art News* his identity was no longer divided between art historian and artist: he increasingly defined himself as an artist. He believed that Analytic Cubism was the great twentieth-century contribution to art history. "Cubism is that moment in the history of modern art when a metaphor, a structural metaphor, worked for a very important piece of meaning, was discovered. It had to do with making the ambiguity of things cohere for a minute, which is a real achievement." In his 1983 review of two David Smith shows in Washington, Silver wrote that "the best

Cubist painting accomplished a comprehensive visual metaphor for those mental states in which rational distinctions between things do not apply, and the unities of time and space do not hold."² He believed that Cubism enabled Picasso, Giacometti, de Kooning, Pollock, and Smith to overcome "the felt limitations of subjective states" and to get beyond "the obsessive origin" of their work.³ Cubist paintings were revelations. He wanted to draw "from them over and over again."

Even as Silver's Cubist drawings are rooted in working from the model, they move away from it. The heads remain small, usually occupying less than a third of the page. Many are framed in such a way that they appear as drawings within drawings. Many are frontal, bisected by a vertical line. The line generates an inherent ambiguity; it could be concave, convex, or parallel to the drawing surface. As the line seems to shift, the center and sides of the head can seem to shift as well, flipping forward and back, an ambiguity that Silver works with to push the heads forward and give them volume.⁴ In some drawings Silver defines features or sections of the face in ways that make it seem as if they want to detach themselves or are at risk of losing their connection to the whole. Eyes may be drawn, rubbed out, or omitted altogether. Within acutely observed networks of exploration and discovery, the authority of the head or figure is perpetually established and undone. Lines, particularly in the foreground, can become entities in themselves, dominating and even sadistic in their controlling insistence.

The Cubist drawings reveal Silver's struggle with narrative. He believed that in viable contemporary art, storytelling and with it attention to personality and social situation were taboo. Because of the locked-in fixity of the frontal, symmetrical head, viewers tend not to read story or character into the image. Think of Byzantine icons or Pharaonic statuary: the frontality suggests the presence of a superior authority, one that is beyond human reach, outside human experience. In the drawings, as in the related sculptural heads, Silver invented ways to bring movement into frontal structures without breaking their authority—for example, by creating two sides of the head with different casts, or cutting around an eye so that it looks as if we could lift it off like a lid, or taking a cast of part of one side of the head and jamming it, reversed, into the same area on the other side. The formal and psychological possibilities of the improvisato-

ry system here, which Silver developed in close contact with the sculptor Christopher Cairns, another student in Agostini's Columbia class, seem limitless.⁵

Then his work changed again. In 1982, on his only trip to Europe as an adult, with Cairns, he visited the Medici Chapel in Florence and was overwhelmed not just by the physicality and drama of Michelangelo's sculptural figures but also by their ability to make the architectural space theirs. They "permeated the air the way music permeates the air. It became a whole thing, in which the physical space inhabited by the work was alive with the thoughts projected by it." Meanwhile, the art world was shifting. The Neo-Expressionist paintings of Anselm Kiefer and others were asserting that art could now—and indeed *had to*—embrace history and myth. Silver's reading had already evolved. "I began to be able to read, for the first time, epic poetry." Alan Mandelbaum's translation of the *Aeneid*

just blew me away. Then I read *Paradise Lost*, and that blew me away, in the same way. I was just overwhelmed with the richness and power of the imagery. . . . I also read Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. . . . and somehow that came together with my trip to Italy in '82. I just saw, or felt, the overwhelming limitation of that. . . . earlier way of thinking about things. All of a sudden I saw the potential greatness of art, or sculpture; its capacity to deal with drama, on the highest level.

He began to construct full figures, in the round, a number of them responding to the elongated proportions and psychic densities that are distinguishing characteristics of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel sculptures and of some of the Greek Hellenistic sculpture that Silver believed had influenced Michelangelo, which had mesmerized him as a child.

In the mid-'80s, Silver's drawings depended on his imagination. The humans and other creatures that emerge are strange. Their poses are familiar from art history, but their identities and actions are not. As in the sculptures, hands can be disproportionately large; heads and arms do not seem to belong to their bodies, or appear to have landed in their bodies from elsewhere. A human can have an animal head. Dogs make their first appearance, and their relation to

a human owner can seem unseemly, perverse. Whereas in the Cubist drawings, heads and bodies had conspicuous structures, in the '80s drawings, many bodies seem made from soft mass, with no bones or skeleton, as if pumped with air. Faces can be both expressive and masklike. Gender can be unclear. Genital areas can communicate puzzlement, if not pain.

The absorbing, perplexing naturalism that emerges in these drawings also distinguishes Silver's sculptural nudes of his wife, Barbara, reticent and uncertain after her stroke, and of a raging pregnant woman with a cherub overhead, whom Silver named Gretchen. With these two works, for the first time his sculpture refers to a specific personal or political situation. One of the emotions that Silver is working with is empathy. Before, "I didn't feel that I could make a head that simply could address itself directly to the spectator, in terms of the emotion I wanted it to convey. I just didn't think it was allowed." In the new figures, "I was willing to engage my intense, physical sympathy. In other words, project myself fully, sympathetically, into those figures, which is different from making images which manifest my anxiety." This is the sculptural direction in which Silver was moving when he became ill, in 1991.

As it gradually became impossible for him to make sculpture, he wrote comical and fateful poetry, playing with historical tropes, composed music, and drew, often in the middle of the night. "The pad's right there on the bed, with a pencil sharpener, the eraser . . . and I pick it up, watching a movie, or whatever. A lot of the stuff has been done watching dumb movies." Drawings from the onset of his illness include bodies resembling flowers or ribbons, or flowers and ribbons as bodies, which could be impaled on or wrapped around tenuous makeshift crucifixes, themselves bodies. The flower-ribbon-body can seem enormous, the entangled relationship between it and crucifix like that of lovers or of a mother and child. These images seem weightless. "Almost everything to some extent [is] flying. If I put something that looks to be attached to the earth, I get depressed." His drawing of a large, robust, soiled, headless winged figure, a clear echo of the *Nike of Samothrace* that then still presided over the grandest stairway in the Louvre, is one of several alongside which Silver wrote verse. It begins:

What's at the top of the stairs must be forced back in time
As mother's to blame for a terrible crime
Put that nightgown in stone on an ancient statue
Which can't come down the stairs and catch you

He drew a figure on a deathbed caressed by nearly invisible hands, and many dogs—panting, predatory, merciless, and also mournful—which to Marion Smit he referred to as the "hounds of hell." "Every one of them—the dinosaurs, the dogs, the crucified ones—they're all projections of myself, in various forms." The images calmed and surprised and at times stunned him. Drawing is now independent of sculpture. It leads not into sculptural possibility but the depths of personal and cultural memory, and into Silver's longing to visualize on paper what haunted and kept him company till the end.

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all Silver quotes were taken from my interviews with him between January and May 1992.
- 2 Jonathan Silver, "The Classical Cubism of David Smith," *Art News* 82, no. 2 (February 1983): 102.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Silver writes about frontality in Jonathan Silver, "Giacometti, Frontality and Cubism," *Art News* 73, no. 6 (Summer 1974): 40–45.
- 5 Although less apparent in his sketchbooks, Silver also modeled beautiful tactile heads whose volumetric integrity is intact. The heads seem to exist in a state before final form, perhaps before awakening, not unlike the sleep of Michelangelo's *Slaves*, where the modeling, which sometimes leads to cubistic faceting, invites light to caress and otherwise act on the surface as it wishes. There's less of an experience of wrongness or violation in these heads. They're closer to the volumetric imagination of Old Kingdom Egyptian sculptural heads, which for Silver, as for Giacometti, were inspirations for representing in sculpture, with fresh perceptual insight, the mass and weight of the human head.

CATALOGUE



1. *Small Bronze Head (Self Portrait)*, c. 1968



2. *Head on Double Base*, c. 1971



3. #68, 1974



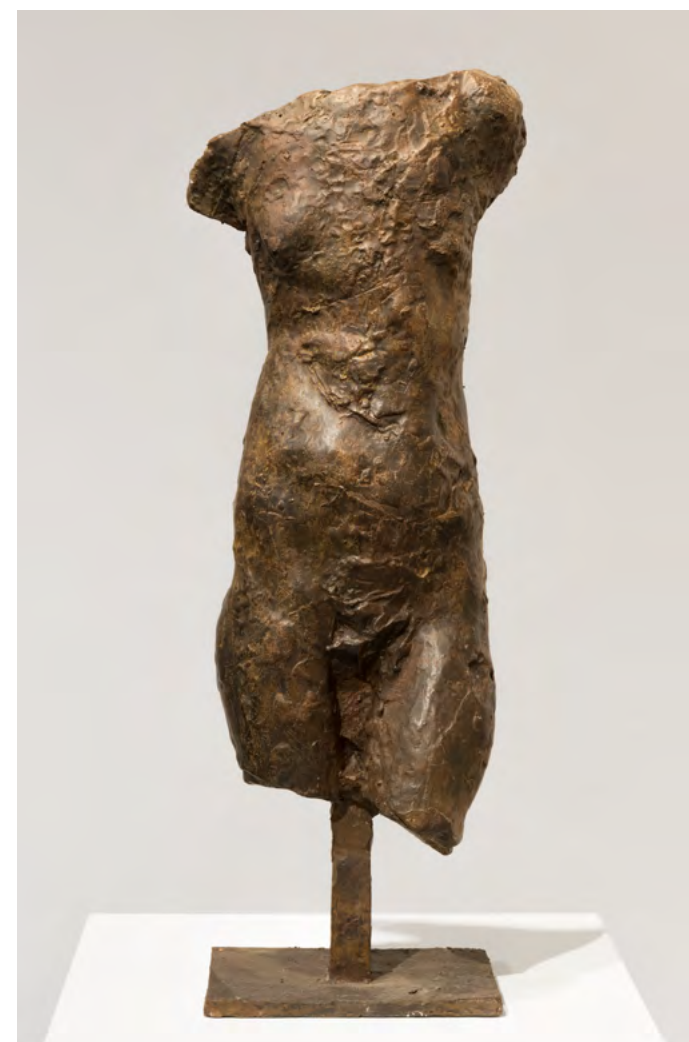
4. #61, c. 1971



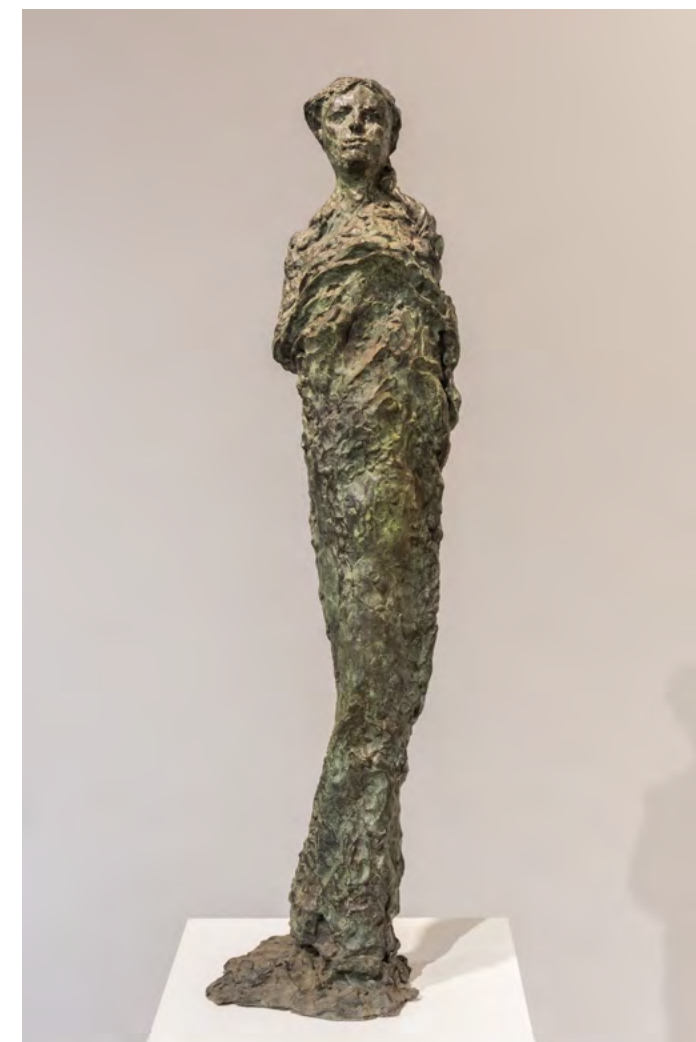
5. *Antique Paige*, 1991



6. *Flora*, 1990



7. *Small Antique Paige*, c. 1989



8. *Thief of Baghdad*, c. 1990



9. #152, c. 1970



10. #95, 1978



11. #77, 1975



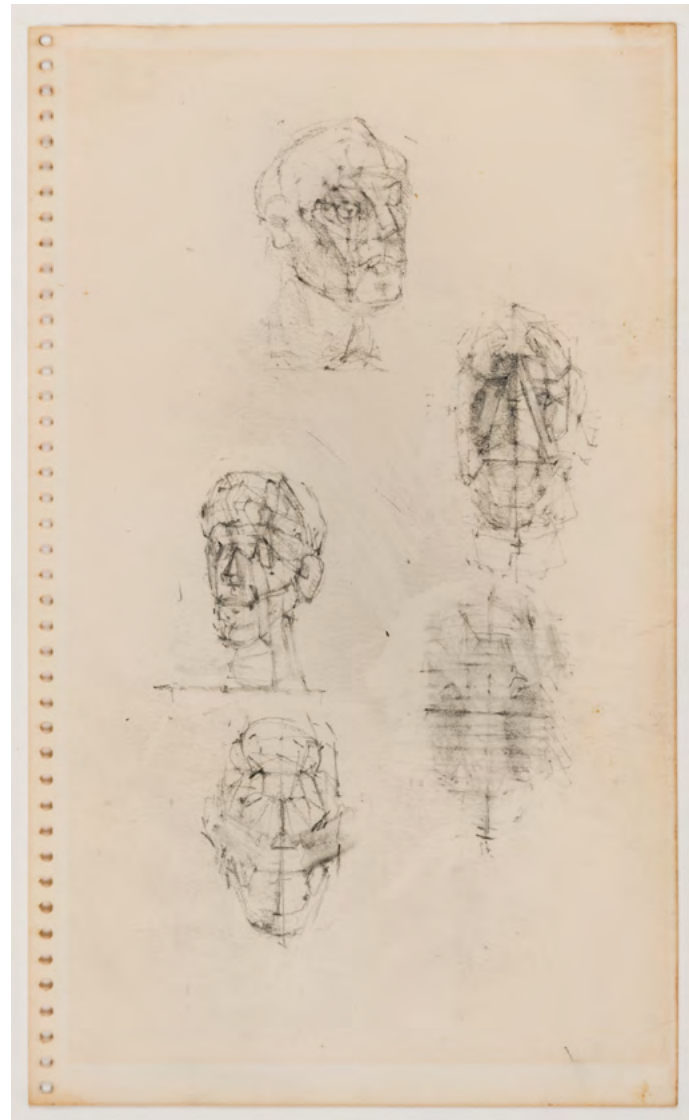
12. #177, c. 1975



13. Head, c. 1982



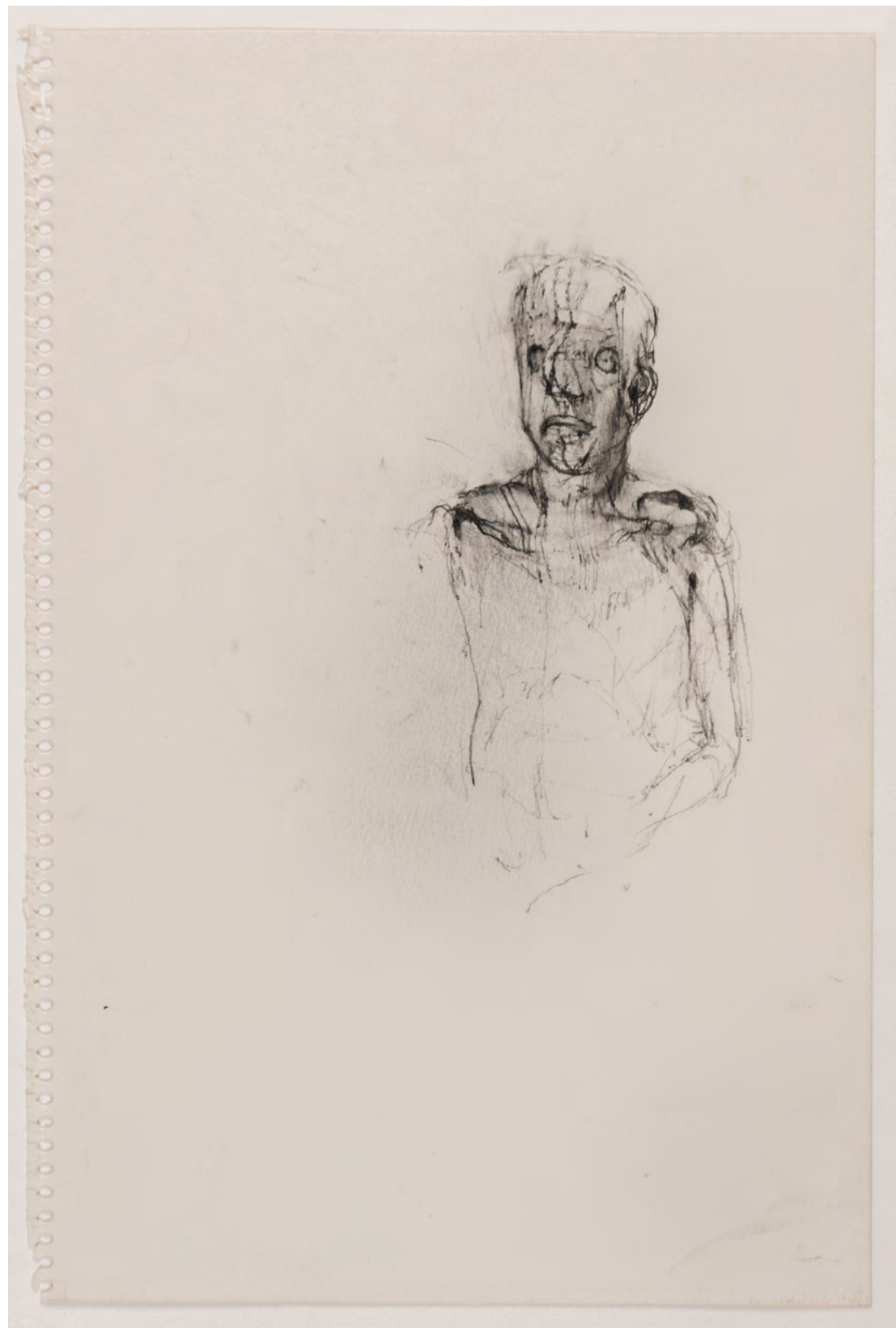
14. JS-45, 1975



15. JS-39, c. 1975



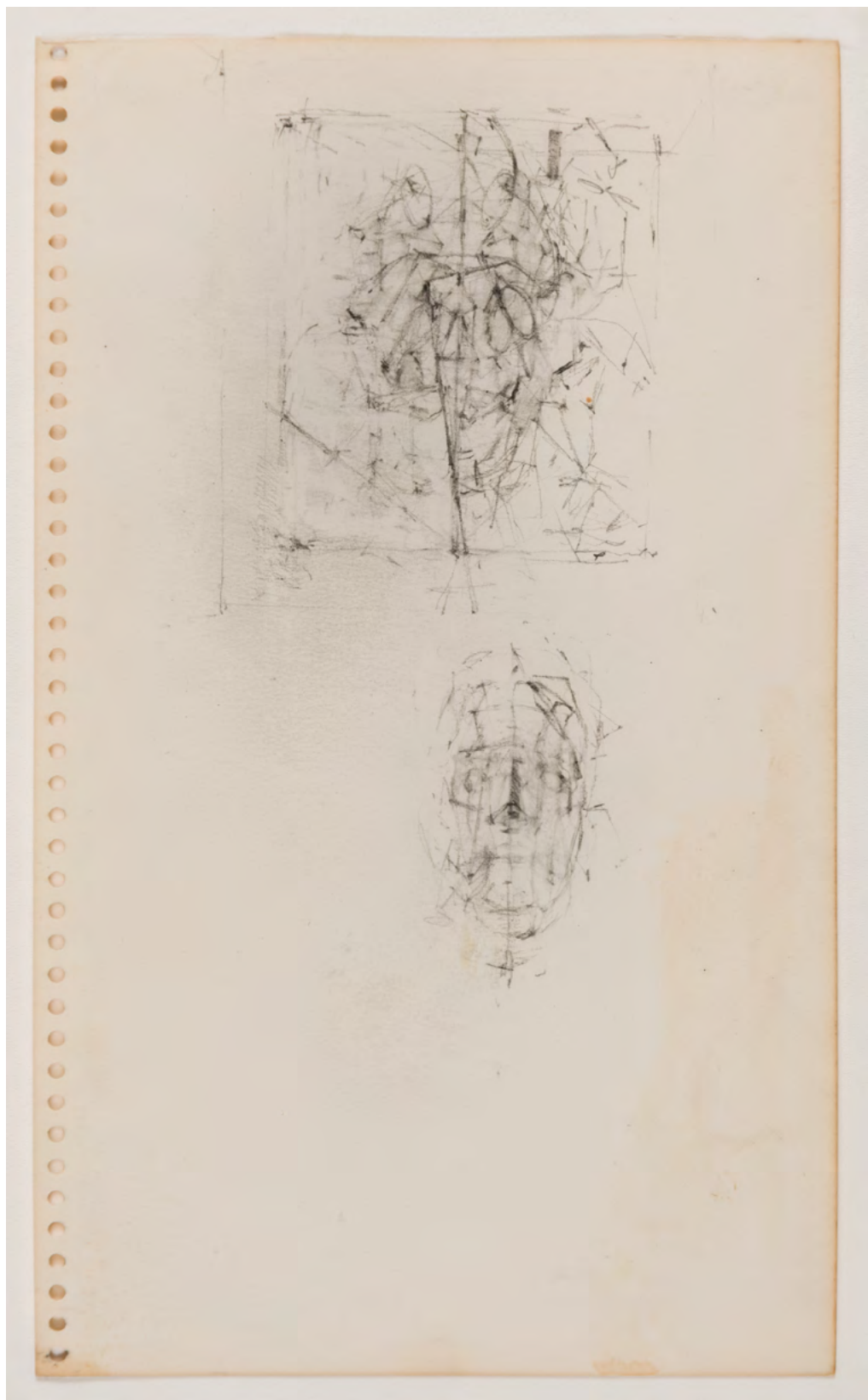
16. #176, c. 1970



17. JS-52, c. 1985



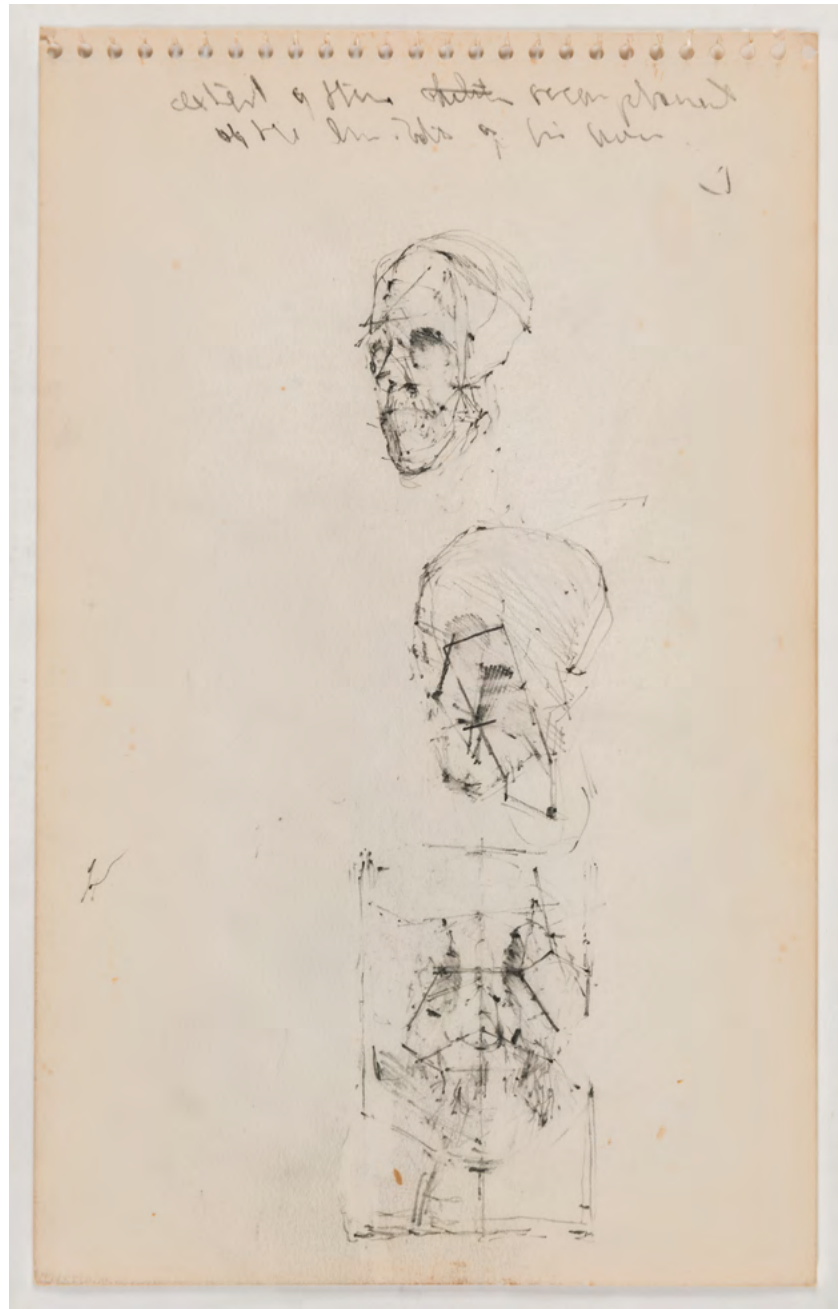
18. JS-31 (Notebook 17), c. 1975



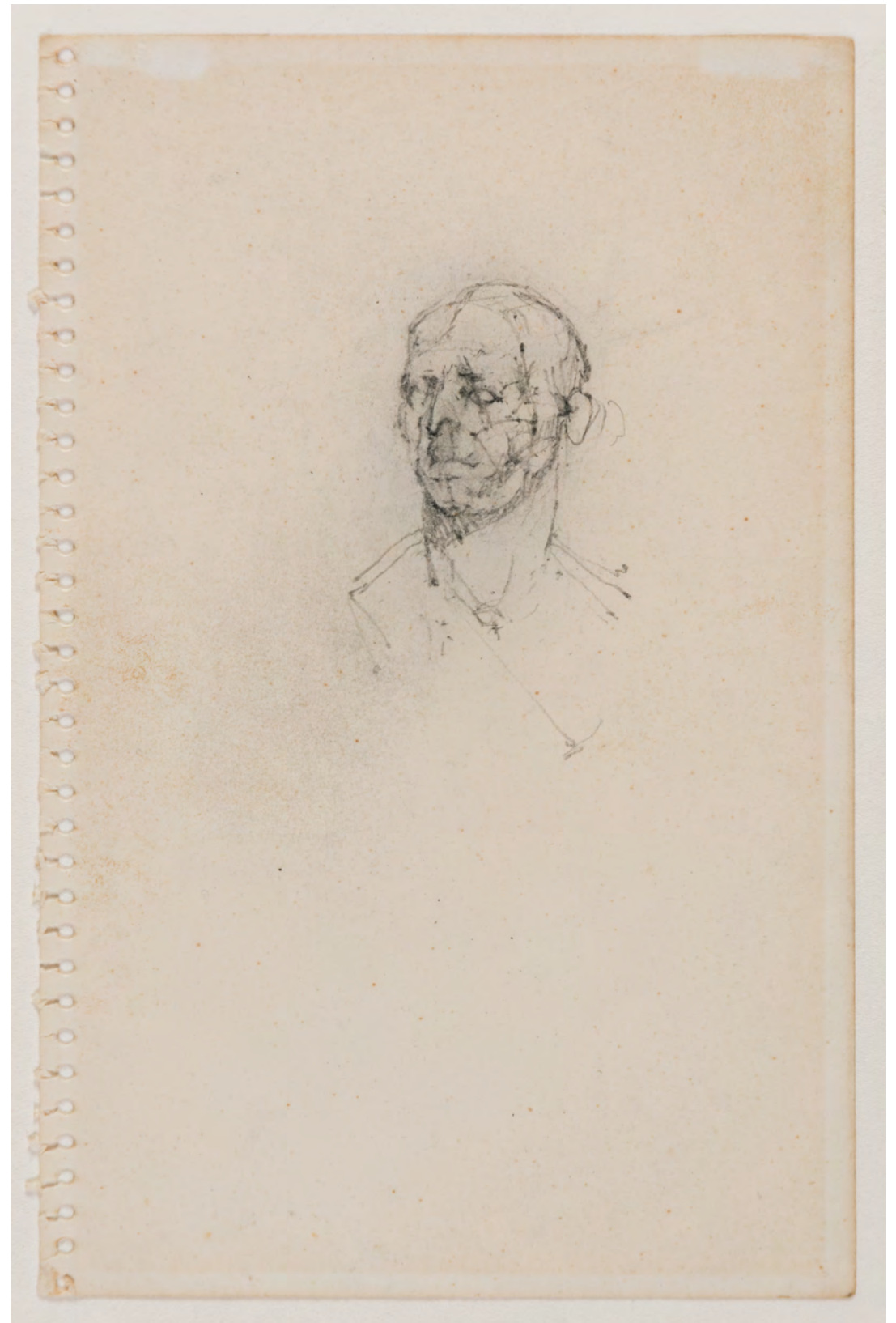
19. JS-41, c. 1975



20. JS-33 (Notebook 3), c. 1975



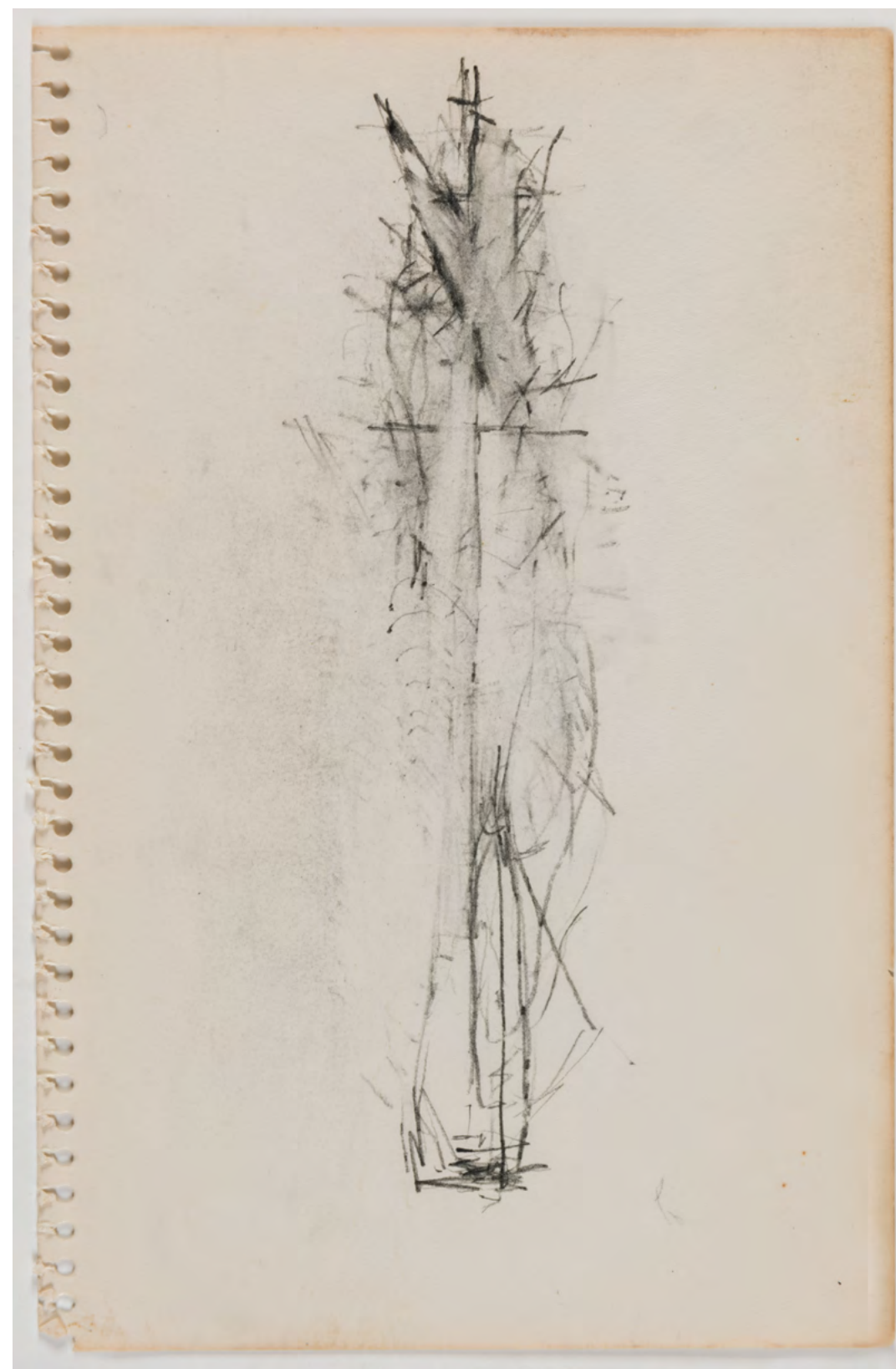
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
21. JS-28, c. 1975
23. JS-32 (Notebook 17), c. 1975
22. JS-37, 1975



24. JS-11, c. 1975



25. *Torso on Metal Base*, c. 1989



26. *JS-47*, 1980



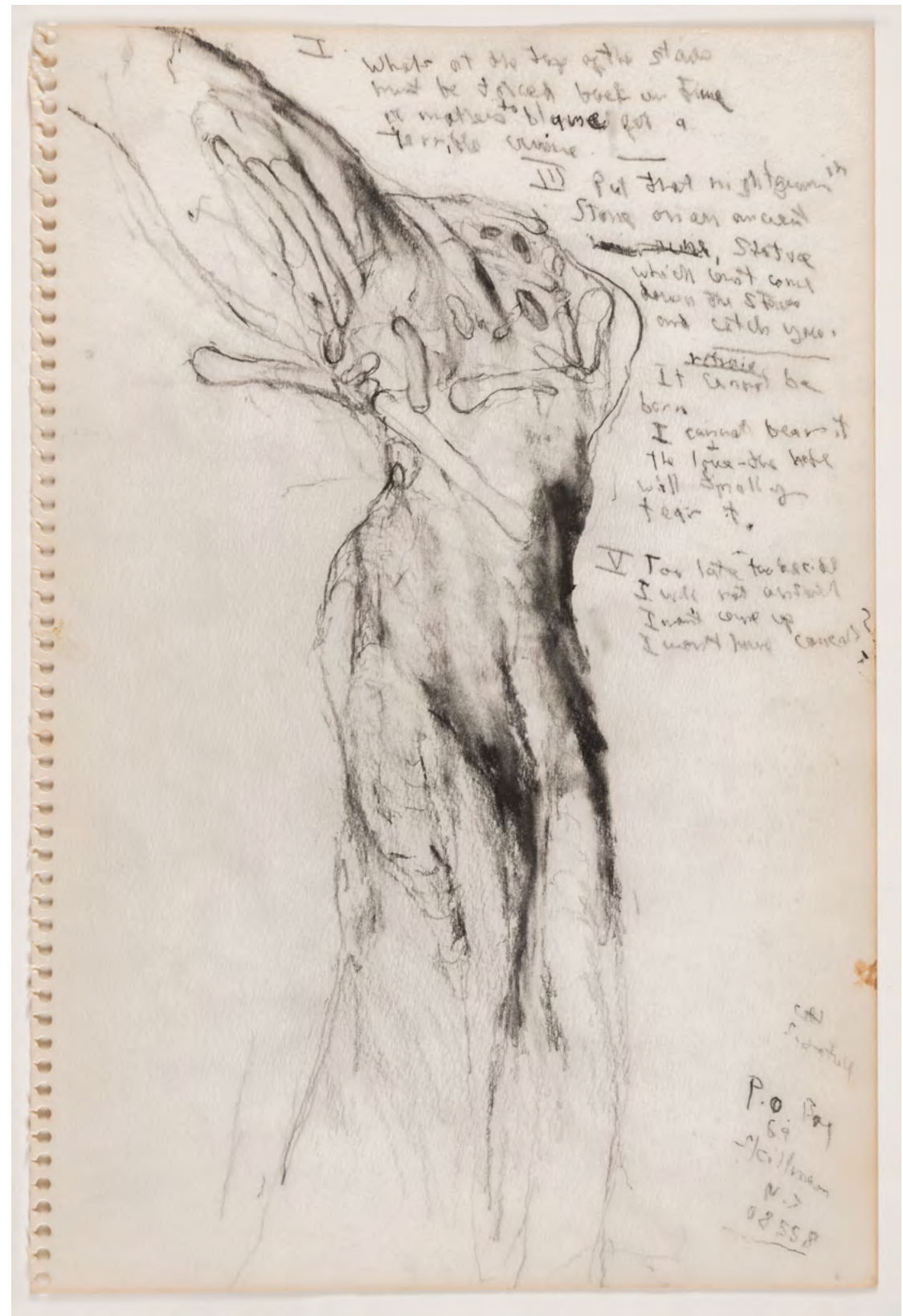
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28. JS-80, 1992



29. *Small Venus*, 1980



30. *JS-92*, c. 1992

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Jonathan Silver

1937-1992

EDUCATION

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1963 | BS, Columbia University, New York, NY, School of General Studies |
| 1966 | MA, Art History, Columbia University, New York, NY |
| 1967–71 | PhD (candidate), Columbia University, New York, NY, Graduate Faculties Dissertation topic: “The Painting of Giacometti,” sponsored by Meyer Schapiro; Edward J. Noble Fellow in Art in Autumn 1968–Spring 1969 |

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 2022 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Plaster, Bronze, & Drawing</i> , Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY (May 5 – June 25) |
| 2018–19 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Drawings and Heads</i> , curated by Marion Smit, New York Studio School, New York, NY (December 8 - January 20) |
| 2017 | <i>Jonathan Silver</i> , organized by Nicole Klagsbrun, Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY (July 1–25) |
| 2008 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Sculpture</i> , Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY (March 11–April 12) |
| 1995 | <i>Jonathan Silver, Heads</i> , Memorial Exhibition curated by Michael Brenson, Sculpture Center, New York, NY (November 14–December 23) |
| 1992 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Drawings</i> , Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY (April 2–25) |
| 1991 | <i>Sculpture by Jonathan Silver</i> , Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY (September 4–October 12) |
| 1989 | Trinity Gallery, Atlanta, GA (January)

<i>The Lower Room: An Installation</i> , Sculpture Center, New York, NY (September 5–October 7) |
| 1988 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Recent Sculpture and an Installation, Chance Overthrown</i> , Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ (April 24–June 12)

Gremillion & Co. Fine Art, Inc., Houston, TX (December) |
| 1987–88 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Sculpture</i> , C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD (December 3–January 2) |
| 1987 | <i>Jonathan Silver</i> , Carlson Gallery, Bernard Center, University of Bridgeport, Bridgeport, CT (September) |
| 1986 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Sculpture, 1976–1986</i> , Gruenebaum Gallery, New York, NY (November 1–December 20) |
| 1984 | <i>Jonathan Silver: Sculpture</i> , New York Studio School, New York, NY (November 9–December 15) |

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2018 | Nicole Klagsbrun, Chelsea Showroom, New York, NY (May 2–6) |
| 2012 | <i>Heads</i> , Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY (January 19–February 18) |
| 2011 | <i>Summer Paper</i> , Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY (July 7–August 5) |
| 2008 | <i>A Sculpture Show 2008</i> [Anthony Caro, Jon Isherwood, John |

- | | |
|---------|---|
| | Ruppert, Annette Sauermann, Jonathan Silver, Osami Tanaka, and John Van Alstine], C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD (January 17–February 21) |
| 2006 | <i>Five Sculptors: Peter Agostini, Christopher Cairns, Bruce Gagnier, Jonathan Silver, George Spaventa</i> , Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, Haverford, PA (March 31–April 30) |
| 2002–03 | <i>Alfred H. Mauer and Jonathan Silver: An Installation</i> , Lori Bookstein Fine Art, New York, NY (December 5–January 25) |
| 1993 | <i>Summer Salon</i> , Victoria Munroe Fine Art, New York, NY (July 8–August 13)

Gremillion & Co. Fine Art, Inc., Houston, TX |
| 1992 | <i>American Institute Invitational Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture</i> , American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, NY (March 2–29)

<i>Apocalypse and Resurrection: Art Exhibit and Benefit for American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFar)</i> , curated by Douglas Maxwell, The Gallery Three Zero, New York, NY (April 23–May 2)

<i>15th Anniversary Show</i> , C. Grimaldis, Baltimore, MD (opened in November)

<i>On Paper</i> , Sculpture Center, New York, NY |
| 1991 | Four-person exhibition [Jonathan Silver, Jim Sanborn, Cristina Iglesias, and Joel Fisher], Morton Street and Charles Street spaces, C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD (closed March 2)

<i>Bronze</i> , Frumkin/Adams Gallery, New York, NY (Reviewed March 1992)

Food Center Sculpture Park at Hunt’s Point, Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, Bronx, NY (reviewed March 8, 1991, closed December 1991)

Kouros Gallery Sculpture Center, Ridgefield, Connecticut (closed October 31)

<i>Selected Works</i> , Gremillion & Co. Fine Art, Inc., Houston, TX |
| 1990 | <i>The Expressionist Surface</i> , Queens Museum, Queens, NY (June 9–August 26)

National Academy of Design, New York, NY
<i>Sculptors Draw the Nude</i> , Luise Ross Gallery, NY |
| 1989 | <i>Ilème Biennale de Sculpture Monte-Carlo 89</i> , Marisa del Re Gallery, Inc., Atrium du Casino, Monte-Carlo, Monaco (March 25–September 30) |
| 1988–89 | <i>Sculptures and Sculptors’ Drawings</i> , Weatherspoon Art Gallery, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC (October 11–February 21) |
| 1988 | <i>American Baroque</i> , Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY (December) |
| 1987 | <i>Romanticism and Classicism</i> , curated by Lenore Malen, The Queensborough Community College Art Gallery, Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York, Bayside, NY (March 15–April 3) |
| 1986 | <i>Heads</i> , curated by Jonathan Silver and Hilarie Johnston, New York Studio School, New York, NY (closed February 14)

<i>Art on Paper 1986</i> . The 22nd Weatherspoon Annual Exhibition, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC (November 16–December 14) |
| 1985 | <i>Group Drawing Show</i> , New York Studio School, New York, NY (closed February 8) |

- Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition*, New York Studio School, New York, NY (closed May 31)
- Gallery Artists and Introductory Works of Grégoire Müller, Jonathan Silver, Harry Kramer*, Gruenebaum Gallery, New York, NY (opened September 6)
- 1979 *Jonathan Silver and Christopher Cairns*, New York Studio School, New York, NY (reviewed January 1980)
- 1978 *Jonathan Silver and Christopher Cairns*, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC (September 10–October 1)
- 1976–77 *Christopher Cairns, Jonathan Silver: Sculpture*, Gallery 4x10, 65 Fourth Avenue at 10th Street, New York, NY (December 14–January 1)
- 1976 *Christopher Cairns, Bruce Gagnier, Jonathan Silver*, Comfort Gallery, Haverford College, Haverford, PA (March 27–April 25)
Gallery 4x10, New York, NY

VISITING ARTIST

- 1988 Triangle Artists’ Workshop 1988, Mashomack Fish and Gamer Preserve, Pine Plains, NY
- 1987 Faulk Visiting Artist, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Thew University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC (February 22–March 15, 1987)

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- City of Baltimore, Maryland
Sid Singer, Mamaroneck, NY
The Southeastern Corporation, Atlanta, GA
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Weatherspoon Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

AWARDS

- 1992 Academy-Institute Award in Art, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, New York, NY

TEACHING POSITIONS

- 1981-92 New York Studio School, New York, NY
1983-84 Parsons School of Design, New York, NY
1970–92 Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, Montclair State College, Montclair, NJ
1966, 1967, 1968 Lecturer, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC; taught Art History and Studio Art

VISITING CRITIC

- 1986 The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC
1982 New York Studio School, New York, NY
1979 New York Studio School, New York, NY
1978 Haverford College, Haverford, PA

- 1977 New York Studio School, New York, NY
Haverford College, Haverford, PA
1976 Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
1975 Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

SELECTED LECTURES

- 1991 “On His Work [*The Lower Room*],” New York Studio School, New York, NY (February 12; recorded by the New York Studio School)
- 1988 Dialogue with Jonathan Silver and Montclair Art Museum Director Robert J Koenig, Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ (May 24)
- 1982 “The Sculpture of Jonathan Silver and Christopher Cairns,” MFA Program, The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- 1981 “Classical Impulse: Two Lectures,” New York Studio School, New York, NY (second lecture recorded by the New York Studio School)
- 1979 “Narrative and Structure: Ten Lectures,” Parson’s School of Design, New York, NY
- 1977 “Giacometti’s Painting,” Rhode Island College, Providence, RI
- 1975 “Modern Art: Six Lectures,” Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ
- “The Biblical Subject ‘Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife’ in Art, with Special Reference to the Late Works of Gauguin,” Haverford College, Haverford, PA
- 1974 “Giacometti: Frontality and Cubism,” with James Lord and Michael Brenson, Giacometti seminar, Haverford College, Haverford, PA
- “Giacometti’s Painting,” Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

SELECTED ARTICLES AND REVIEWS BY JONATHAN SILVER

- Review of *Larry Rivers* by Sam Hunter, *The Print Collector’s Newsletter* 1, no. 8 (July–August 1970), 67–69.
- “A Sense of Human Motion,” *ArtNews* 73, no. 7 (April 1974), 81. Review of Peter Agostini exhibition at Haverford College, Haverford, PA.
- “Giacometti: Frontality and Cubism.,” *ArtNews* 73, no. 6 (Summer 1974), 40–42. Review of Giacometti exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY.
- “Elie Nadelman: A Single Notion of Style,” *ArtNews* 74, no. 9 (November 1975), 70–72. Review of Nadelman retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.
- “Remaking the History of American Sculpture,” *ArtNews* 79, no. 6 (Summer 1976), 70–72. Review of *200 Years of American Sculpture* at the Whitney Museum, New York, NY, March 16–September 26, 1976.
- Review of the Susan Rodgers exhibition at the Touchstone Gallery, New York, NY, *Art World*, May 1982.
- “The Classical Cubism of David Smith,” *ArtNews* 82, no. 2 (February 1983), 100–103. Review of Smith exhibitions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- “Christopher Cairns: Sculpture at New York Studio School,” *Art World* 30, no. 2 (November 1985). Review of Cairns exhibitions at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture and the Leslie Cecil Gallery, both in New York, NY.

- “Giacometti on the Couch: A Biography,” review of *Giacometti: A Biography*, by James Lord, *ArtNews* 85, no. 3 (March 1986), 43–44.
- “William Tucker.” *ArtNews* 89, no. 1 (January 1990), 160. Review of William Tucker exhibition at the David McKee Gallery, New York, NY.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Christopher Cairns, Bruce Gagnier, Jonathan Silver*, catalogue for exhibition at the Comfort Gallery, Haverford College, Haverford, PA, March 27–April 25, 1976.
- William Zimmer, “Christopher Cairns/Jonathan Silver,” review of two-person exhibition at the Gallery 4x10, New York, NY, *Arts* 51, no. 8 (February 1977), 38.
- Mona da Vinci, “Jonathan Silver,” review of Silver’s sculptures in a two-person exhibition at the Gallery 4x10, New York, NY, *ArtNews* 76, no. 4 (April 1977), 132.
- Cynthia Nadelman, “Christopher Cairns and Jonathan Silver,” review of two-person exhibition at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *ArtNews* 79, no. 1 (January 1980), 162, 164.
- Michael Brenson, “Art People: Studio School True to Itself,” *New York Times*, February 25, 1983, C18.
- Barnaby Ruhe, review of Silver’s exhibition at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *Art World*, November 1984.
- Michael Brenson, “Art: Sculpture by Jonathan Silver,” review of exhibition at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *New York Times*, November 23, 1984, C34.
- Michael Brenson, “Group Drawing Show,” review of exhibition at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *New York Times*, January 25, 1985, C24.
- Michael Brenson, review of *Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition*, New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *New York Times*, May 24, 1985, C21.
- Michael Brenson, “Heads,” review of group exhibition, curated by Jonathan Silver and Hilarie Johnson, at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, *New York Times*, January 31, 1986, C32.
- Michael Brenson, “A Fall Art Scene That’s Bristling with Energy: Genteel SoHo Is Still a Vital Center of Activity,” SoHo gallery round-up that includes a review of Silver’s exhibition at the Gruenebaum Gallery, New York, NY, *New York Times*, November 7, 1986, C26.
- Art on Paper 1986: The 22nd Weatherspoon Annual Exhibition*, catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition presented at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, NC, November 16–December 14, 1986.
- Michael Brenson, “Sculpture Breaks the Mold of Minimalism,” *New York Times*, November 23, 1986, H1, H23.
- Susan Gill, “Jonathan Silver,” review of Silver’s exhibition at the Gruenebaum Gallery, *ArtNews* 86, no. 2 (February 1987), 139–40.
- Jed Perl, “Jottings along the way,” includes review of Silver’s exhibition at the Gruenebaum Gallery, *New Criterion*, 5, no. 7 (March 1987), 19–20.
- Romanticism and Classicism*, catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, curated by Lenore Malen, Queensborough Community College Art Gallery, Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, Bayside, New York, March 15–April 3, 1987, 28-29.

- Lynne Ambrosini and Michelle Facos, interview with Jonathan Silver, in *Rodin: The Cantor Gift to the Brooklyn Museum*, exhibition catalogue published in connection with the opening of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Gallery at the Brooklyn Museum (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1987), 37–41.
- Michael Brenson, “Rodin’s Heroic Figures in an Analytic Age,” *New York Times*, August 23, 1987, section 2, 7.
- John Dorsey, “The Sculpture of Survival: Classic Forms Convey Modern-day Message,” review of Silver’s exhibition at C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD, *Baltimore Sun*, December 3, 1987, 1C, 11C.
- John Dorsey, “Religious Impulse Shapes Silver’s Sculptural Vision,” review of Silver’s exhibition at C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD, *Baltimore Sun*, December 23, 1987, 1B, 4B.
- William Zimmer, “Erudite Sculpture in Montclair,” review of Silver’s exhibition at the Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, NJ, *New York Times* (New Jersey Edition), May 29, 1988, NJ8.
- American Baroque*, exhibition catalogue, with text by Pedro Cuperman, for an exhibition at the Holly Solomon Gallery, New York, NY, December 1988, 17–19, 34 (Spanish translation: 77–78, 88).
- Triangle Artists’ Workshop, 1988*, catalogue of the work of artists participating in the Triangle Artists’ Workshop at Mashomack Fish and Game Preserve in Pine Plains, NY (New York: Triangle Arts Association, 1988), n.p.
- John Dorsey, “Venus Sculpture Slashes Niche at Charles Center,” review of Silver’s *Birth of Venus* in Hopkins Plaza, Charles Center, Baltimore, MD, *Baltimore Sun*, January 31, 1989, 1C, 2C.
- Ilème Biennale de Sculpture Monte-Carlo 89*, exhibition catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, organized by New York’s Marisa del Re Gallery, in collaboration with Société des bains de mer for Les Printemps des arts de Monte-Carlo Casino, Monte-Carlo, Monaco, March 25–September 30, 1989, 63.
- Jonathan Silver: The Lower Room, an Installation*, installation at the Sculpture Center, exhibition catalogue, with essay by Donna Harkavy, New York, NY, September 5–October 7, 1989.
- Michael Brenson, “A Tableau Invoking the Netherworld,” review of Silver’s installation at the Sculpture Center, *New York Times*, September 8, 1989, C22.
- Lisa Holst, “Jonathan Silver: Sculpture Center,” review of Silver’s installation at the Sculpture Center, *ArtNews* 88, no. 9 (November 1989), 169–70.
- Eileen Myles, “Jonathan Silver at Sculpture Center,” review of Silver’s installation at the Sculpture Center, *Art in America* 78, no. 1 (January 1990), 157.
- Barbara C. Matilsky, *The Expressionist Surface: Contemporary Art in Plaster*, exhibition catalogue for the exhibition of the same name at the Queens Museum, Flushing, NY, June 9–August 26, 1990, 34–35.
- Michael Brenson, “Plaster as a Medium, Not Just an Interim Step,” review of *The Expressionist Surface: Contemporary Art in Plaster* at the Queens Museum, *New York Times*, July 13, 1990, C23.
- Michael Brenson, “Sculpture Garden Yields Bumper Crop,” review of group exhibition at the Kouros Gallery Sculpture Center, Ridgefield, Connecticut, *New York Times* (Connecticut Edition), September 16, 1990, CN26.
- Walker Art Center: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection*, the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1990), 553.

John Dorsey, “Sculpture Show Themes: Death, Disintegration—and Continuity,” review of four-person sculpture exhibition at the Morton Street and Charles Street spaces of the C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD, *Baltimore Sun*, January 22, 1991, 1D, 8D.

Michael Brenson, “Sculpture Borne by the Earth and Lighted by the Sky,” review of group exhibition at the Food Center Sculpture Park at Hunt’s Point, Hunts Point Food Distribution Center, Bronx, NY, *New York Times*, March 8, 1991, C30.

Gerrit Henry, “Jonathan Silver at Victoria Munroe,” review of Silver’s exhibition at the Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY, September 4–October 12, *ArtNews* 90, no. 9 (November 1991), 135.

Robert Taplin, “Jonathan Silver at Victoria Munroe,” *Art in America* 79, no. 11 (November 1991), 148–49.

Peggy Cyphers, review of Silver’s exhibition at the Victoria Munroe Gallery, *Arts* 66, no. 4 (December 1991), 79–80.

Selected Works, exhibition catalogue, Houston, TX: Gremillion & Co. Fine Art, Inc., 1991.

Douglas Dreishpoon, “New Bronze Sculpture,” review of group exhibition at Frumkin/Adams, New York, NY, *ArtNews* 91, no. 3 (March 1992), 136.

Douglas Dreishpoon, “Jonathan Silver: Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York,” review of Silver’s exhibition at the Victoria Munroe Gallery, New York, NY, April 2–25, 1992, *Sculpture* 11, no. 2 (March–April 1992), 68–69.

Apocalypse and Resurrection: Art Exhibit and Benefit for American Foundation for AIDS Research (AMFar), exhibition catalogue for group exhibition of the same name curated by Douglas Maxwell, at Gallery Three Zero, New York, NY, April 23–May 2, 1992.

Roberta Smith, “Jonathan Silver, 54, a Sculptor Known for Mixing Forms, Dies,” *New York Times*, July 13, 1992, B9.

John Dorsey, “In Presentation of Works, Artistry Anew,” review of *15th Anniversary Show* at the C. Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD, *Baltimore Sun*, November 5, 1992, 9E.

Jonathan Silver: Heads, catalogue for memorial exhibition curated and with an essay by Michael Brenson, Sculpture Center, New York, NY, November 14–December 23, 1995.

Pepe Karmel, “Jonathan Silver: ‘Heads’,” review of Silver’s exhibition at the Sculpture Center, *New York Times*, December 1, 1995, C32.

Nancy Princenthal, “Jonathan Silver at the Sculpture Center,” *Art in America* 84, no. 3 (March 1996), 101.

Cynthia Nadelman, “Jonathan Silver: Sculpture Center.” *ArtNews* 95, no. 4 (April 1996), 135–36.

Five Sculptors: Peter Agostini, Christopher Cairns, Bruce Gagnier, Jonathan Silver, George Spaventa, exhibition catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, organized by Alexis, Christopher, and Nicholas Cairns, Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College, Haverford, PA, March 31–April 30, 2006, 14–17.

Cindy Kelly, *Outdoor Sculpture in Baltimore: A Historical Guide to Public Art in the Monumental City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 8, 41.

Coleen Fitzgibbon, *Jonathan Silver: Infidel in the Studio* (New York, NY: LES Press, 2017).

FILM

Jonathan Silver: Infidel in the Studio. Directed by Coleen Fitzgibbon, 1992–2017.

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