

SOREL ETROG

Life & Work

By Alma Mikulinsky



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BIOGRAPHY

Sorel Etrog (1933–2014) was a truly international artist. He was born in Romania, immigrated to Israel, studied in the United States and, though based in Toronto, Canada, for more than fifty years, worked and exhibited around the world. Best known as a sculptor, he also drew, painted, illustrated books, wrote poetry and plays, and ventured into film. Informed by his childhood experiences during the Second World War and under Soviet rule, as well as by his later immersion in philosophical writings that questioned the nature of existence in a postwar world, he explored the tensions between such apparent opposites as movement and stasis and the mechanical and the organic throughout a long and diverse career.

CHILDHOOD IN ROMANIA

Sorel Etrog was born Sorel Eserik on August 29, 1933, in Iași, a large city in the eastern part of what was then the Kingdom of Romania.¹ He grew up just outside the city, living with his parents, Moriț (Moshe) and Tony (née Valter), in the home of his paternal grandparents. Sorel fondly remembered being in close proximity to his extended family and specifically recalled the influence of his grandfather, a carpenter: "For me his wood shop was like a shrine. The smell of wood, glue, and stain filled my nostrils the day I was born and became a sacred part of my childhood. My dream was that one



LEFT: Maternal grandmother Feigi with Sorel, 1933, photographer unknown.
RIGHT: Sorel with parents Tony and Moriț, c.1936, photographer unknown.

day I'd be allowed to use some of his tools or even have some of my own."²

The young family eventually moved to Iași, where Moriț opened a restaurant. The Jewish community of the city numbered more than thirty-five thousand people, about a third of its total population at the time.³ Like many Romanian Jews, Moriț and Tony were immersed in the local culture and raised their children in the same way: at home they spoke Romanian rather than Yiddish, and though the family observed the High Holidays, Sorel did not receive a Jewish education. In 1940, the Eseriks welcomed a baby girl, Falizia (Zipora), into the family.

Sorel began his informal art education at a local bookstore in Iași, whose owner was also a painter. The artist later recalled: "[Since] not many people could afford to buy books... [m]any people, my mother included, borrowed them from a bookshop that was also a private library.... I would slip into the back room to the owner's studio. He was also a painter. I was fascinated by his... paintings and the smell of turpentine and oil paint intoxicated me."⁴

The Second World War began with the German invasion of Poland in September of 1939. The Kingdom of Romania was initially neutral, but, following a coup in the summer of 1940, the new dictatorship allied itself with Germany and its anti-Semitic policies. Moriț was one of the few men to survive the Iași Pogrom of June 29 to July 6, 1941, a notorious mass killing in which more than thirteen thousand Romanian Jews were murdered. Although he was wounded, he managed to survive by climbing a curtain in a theatre where one of the massacres took place.⁵ Violence against Jews continued throughout the war years, and when Sorel was nine years old, he saw a friend shot before his eyes. Later in life he reflected that after that horrific incident he could no longer be shocked.⁶ By the end of the war, Iași's Jewish community had been largely eradicated.



Romanian soldiers and a cadet arrest a group of Jews at 157 I.C. Brătianu Street during the Iași Pogrom, June 29, 1941, photographer unknown.

Following the Soviet occupation of Romania in 1944, Sorel's family suffered hunger, poverty, and violence, and Morit still had not fully recovered from the injuries he received during the pogrom. Sorel helped out by smuggling food under his clothes and selling goods on the black market, experiences that shaped him for years to come. In 1946, after quietly selling their property and restaurant, the family attempted to leave Romania for Austria by way of Hungary. But they were caught by the Securitate, the Romanian secret service, at the border and both parents were arrested. Thirteen-year-old Sorel was left responsible for his young sister for weeks until their mother was released. When their father was finally able to go home months later, they all returned to Iași before leaving for good in 1950.⁷

ARTISTIC TRAINING IN TEL AVIV

Sorel and his family succeeded in escaping Soviet Romania, travelling via Istanbul to Israel, where the Eseriks changed their surname to Etrog–Moriț and Falizia changed their first names to Moshe and Zipora, respectively. After spending a short time in the Sha'ar Aliyaa refugee camp, located west of the city Haifa, they moved in with his paternal uncle Itzhak in the city of Rishon Le'tzion, where he had lived since before the Second World War. After two years at Itzhak's humble home, during which time Moshe worked at his brother's convenience store, they purchased their own apartment with the help of Etrog's maternal aunt Rose, who was living in the United States.



LEFT: Zipora and Sorel in front of the family store in Israel, c.1952, photographer unknown. RIGHT: The Etrog family at their home in Rishon Le'tzion, Israel, c.1950s, photographer unknown. *From left to right: Zipora, Tony, Sorel, and Moshe.*

In 1953 Etrog began his studies in Tel Aviv's Arts Institute for Painting and Sculpture, while simultaneously serving mandatory time in the Israel Defence Forces' medical corps as a messenger.⁸ At the institute he studied painting, graphic art, and stage design under the painter Moshe Mokady (1902-1975), the Romanian-born Dadaist pioneer Marcel Janco (1895-1984), and the art historian Eugene Kolb (1898-1959). Here, Etrog discovered the art of the European avant-garde, a loose group of early twentieth-century art movements dedicated to defying tradition. Of special interest to Etrog were the painters Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Paul Klee (1897-1940), Joan Miró (1893-1983), and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), who experimented with abstraction and broke free of previous styles and conventions. During this time Etrog became friends with a group of artists who introduced him to the music of modernist composers like Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), Béla Bartók (1881-1945), and Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951). Their individual rejection of common notions of harmony and balance inspired him.

Cubist collage as well as modernist music inspired Etrog to invent a working method that he called "Painted Constructions." He practised it from 1952 until 1960, honing it through a trial-and-error process, at first using canvases to create the works and then moving to irregularly shaped objects made entirely of wood. They are two-dimensional paintings, meant to hang on the wall, but they also feature three-dimensional raised elements—lines and geometric shapes—to produce works that echo Constructivist reliefs such as those by the Russian-born sculptor Naum Gabo (1890-1977). Despite their overall flatness, they embody an important interplay between sculpture and painting, such as in *Musical Impression*, 1956.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Musical Impression*, 1956, painted wood, 73 x 44 cm, Tel Aviv Museum of Art. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Prayer for a New Moon*, 1952, oil on canvas on irregular stretcher, 40.6 x 45.7 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

Etrog's talent was quickly noticed by his instructors, and after finishing art school in 1955 he was invited by Janco to attend his Seminary for Painting and Composition in 1955-56. For over a year Etrog lived at the well-known Israeli artists' village Ein Hod and dedicated himself fully to art. His work was exhibited in several group shows in 1958, including *The Art of Tomorrow* at the Haifa Museum of Art, which brought together works by artists under thirty, and *10 Years of Israeli Painting* at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, which involved more than 120 contributors. These public institutions also began to add Etrog's work to their permanent collections; the Museum of Modern Art in Haifa bought the drawing *Composition (Collage)*, n.d., and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art purchased *Ladder of Surprise*, 1955-57. Etrog's former teacher Eugene Kolb purchased *Requiem in Blue*, n.d., for his private collection around the same time.⁹

In December 1957, Etrog contacted Ralph Segalman, the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Waterbury, Connecticut (where Etrog's aunt Rose was living), and asked for his help in securing a study grant in the United States or abroad. In February 1958, the Brooklyn Museum Art School offered Etrog a scholarship that would cover his tuition for the next academic year.¹⁰ Before departing for America, however, the artist opened his first solo show at the ZOA (Zionists of America) House in Tel Aviv. The exhibition received positive reviews in the Israeli press; critics took note of his works' originality and emphasized their irregular shapes and their unique style, qualities that are well represented by *Parade*, 1954-56, the largest and most ambitious of Etrog's early works. One reviewer enthusiastically claimed that the twenty-five-year-old Etrog was one of the most original painters of his generation, a true avant-garde artist rebelling against artistic conventions.¹¹



Sorel Etrog, late 1950s, photographer unknown.

NEW YORK CITY AND TORONTO

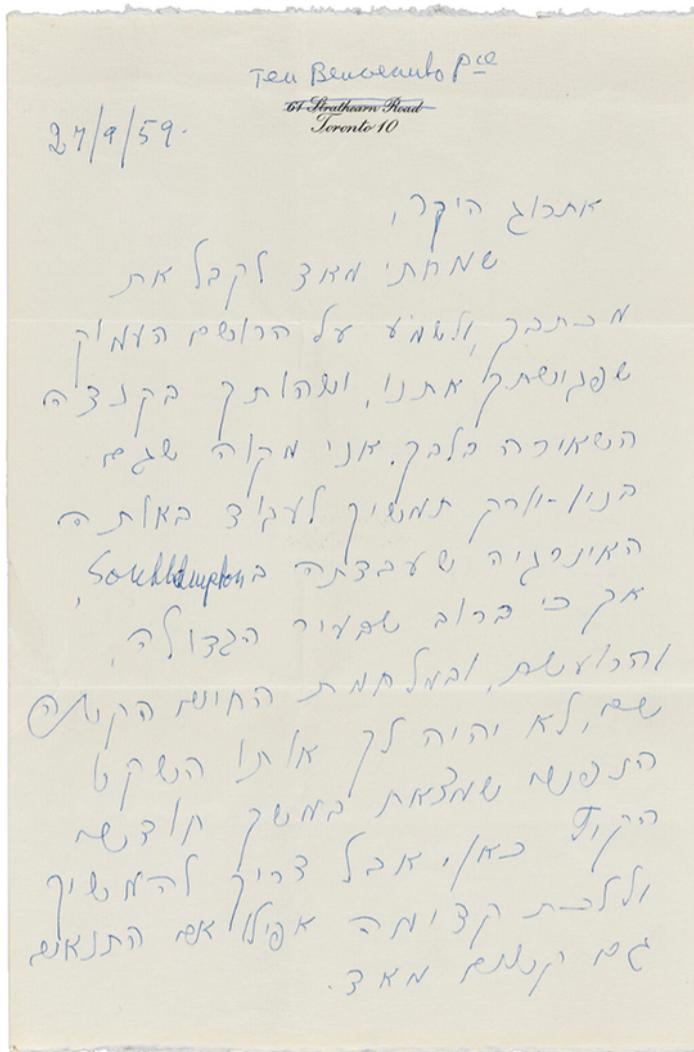
Despite his high hopes, Etrog's first year at the Brooklyn Museum Art School was "lonely and discouraging."¹² Although he was fascinated by the museum's collection—he was especially drawn to its African and Oceanic art holdings, whose expressive shapes left their mark on his imagination—he didn't find his place in the school. His course load was considerable and his limited English prevented him from engaging in the classes or making friends.¹³ New York's high cost of living was challenging, and he could only afford to rent an abandoned fish shop with no heat or running water. To make ends meet, he had to work at an old-age home teaching Hebrew, giving art therapy classes, and supervising bingo games for a low salary and meals.¹⁴ His only support, emotional as well as financial, came from his aunt Rose and her family in Connecticut.¹⁵



Samuel J. Zacks's collection in 1960, photograph by Walter Curtin.

Etrog attempted without success to gain representation in New York during his first months in the city. However, in March 1959, he had a lucky break when he showed up at the gallery of Rose Fried (1896–1970) with several of his Painted Constructions. Although Fried was not immediately responsive to the works, the Jewish-Canadian businessman Sam (Samuel J.) Zacks (1904–1970) walked into the gallery while Etrog was there. Zacks, an ardent Zionist and strong supporter of Israel, and his Israeli-born wife, Ayala Zacks (1912–2011), were among Canada's leading collectors of modern art.¹⁶ Zacks bought *White Scaffolding*, 1958, from Etrog on the spot for \$200. Before returning to Toronto, Zacks saw more of Etrog's works at the artist's derelict studio; he was so impressed that he invited the young artist to visit him in Canada.

Etrog travelled to Canada for the first time in late June 1959. During this trip Zacks offered Etrog the opportunity to spend the rest of the summer at his Southampton home, 225 kilometres north of Toronto on Lake Huron. Among Zacks's many businesses was a plywood factory near Southampton, where an artist could have access to materials and studio space. Etrog accepted the generous offer and spent two and a half months taking full advantage of the free materials, the power tools, and the peace of mind that came with his much-improved living conditions.



LEFT: A letter that Ayala Zacks wrote in Hebrew to Sorel Etrog, September 27, 1959 (page one of two), Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog at the Zacks' Southampton Wood Workshop, 1959, photograph by L. Brown. Ayala Zacks wrote to Etrog in Hebrew, their common language. Asking about his living conditions in NYC, she hoped that he found the peace of mind to continue his work. She urged him to improve his English, as well as to expand his horizons by "seeing, reading, and hearing" but always staying attuned to his inner creative voice.

Etrog's productivity soared; although he had started work on only two Painted Constructions during his academic year, he completed more than twenty while in Southampton.¹⁷ He also drew incessantly and created his first sculptures—wood carvings such as *The Golem*, 1959, terracotta works such as *Wings*, 1959, and several plaster moulds such as *Barbarian Head*, 1959. The sculptures are the first evidence of a new aesthetic approach for Etrog, one that incorporated ideas and themes borrowed from the African and Oceanic art he had seen at both the Brooklyn Museum and in the Zacks' collection.¹⁸ During this time, Etrog became acquainted with the work of the British artists Henry Moore (1898–1986) and Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975), whose work Sam and Ayala Zacks also collected and who, together with the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), would influence Etrog's work in the years to come.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *The Golem*, 1959, wood, 40.6 x 33 x 15.2 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Barbara Hepworth, *Sea form (Porthmeor)*, 1958, bronze, 81.5 x 30.4 x 115 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Etrog made his first Canadian sales to Sam and Ayala Zacks and, through them, to their collector friends. He soon gained representation at the newly established Gallery Moos in the Yorkville neighbourhood of Toronto, which specialized in positioning local artists in an international context, as well as in European art. The owner, Walter Moos (1926-2013), gave Etrog his first Canadian show, which opened on October 1, 1959.¹⁹ Even at this early stage of his career, Etrog involved himself in decisions about how his work would be promoted and contextualized. Moos felt that an exhibition catalogue would be an unnecessary extravagance; Etrog countered that he would pay for it out of his own pocket if need be and won the argument.²⁰ H. Baer, reviewing the show, was full of praise for the show and wrote: "It happens sometimes but very rarely that an exhibition of painting is completely entralling; proof that the artist achieved complete communication. Sorel Etrog is an example."²¹



Etrog exhibition at Gallery Moos, Toronto, 1959, photograph by Anthony Hayman.

THE LAUNCHING OF AN ARTIST

Etrog returned to New York City in the fall of 1959 but quickly began his application to become a Canadian resident. After his successful Canadian summer, he could afford to rent a proper studio in Manhattan with the painter Edith Isaac-Rose (1929-2018) and to leave behind his part-time job to commit to his art full-time. He abandoned his Painted Constructions to devote himself to sculpture, while still regularly drawing and sketching, as he would throughout his life, both independent works as well as studies for sculptures that, at times, numbered in the hundreds for a single piece.²² He developed a new style of biomorphic works, sculptures that were inspired by living organisms and natural forms of growth, as well as by the art he had seen in the Oceanic collection of the Brooklyn Museum.

Etrog continued to hone his technical skills as a sculptor. He practised not only moulding in plaster but also set about learning the technical ins and outs of casting in bronze, specifically the multistage lost-wax process, at the Modern Art Foundry in New York. He would use bronze almost exclusively in his sculptures from that point on and took pride in his ability to command this labour-intensive process single-handedly.

The transition to a new medium and style yielded immediate successes. Gallery Moos gave Etrog a second exhibition in 1961, featuring works described as providing "almost endless visual delights in tensions and counterpoints" that caught the attention of the important American art collector Joseph Hirshhorn (1899–1981). He immediately purchased eight sculptures.²³ This sale was unprecedented in the Canadian art world at the time and was newsworthy enough to be reported in all the major Toronto papers.²⁴ Etrog's work began to be recognized internationally as well, in part thanks to Zacks's connections and unwavering support.²⁵ In 1961 the Guggenheim Museum in New York acquired *Blossom*, 1960–61, and in 1963, following Etrog's first solo exhibition in New York, the Museum of Modern Art purchased *Ritual Dancer*, 1960–62. The Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, the Netherlands, acquired *Complexes of a Young Lady*, 1962, also in 1963.²⁶ All these works were inspired by the natural forms of trees, flowers, and other vegetation, and their acquisition by major institutions shows that Etrog's personal artistic evolution was in step with a fascination in the wider art world with biomorphism.

Etrog received his Canadian residency status in 1962 but remained in New York until the following year to complete his studies. In 1963, before settling into a studio on the top floor of the former Tip Top Tailors building near Toronto's waterfront, which was owned by his friends and future gallerists Yael and Ben Dunkelman, Etrog returned to Israel for the first time since 1958. He also travelled to Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, and France with his sister, Zipora, who went on with him to New York and Toronto afterward. In Florence he encountered Etruscan art for the first time. These ancient works would become the inspiration for what Etrog would name his Links period, during which both his sculptures and his paintings featured a motif of two elements connected by a loop.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Blossom*, 1960–61, bronze, 111 cm (h), The Estate of Sorel Etrog.
RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Ritual Dancer*, 1960–62, bronze, 147.3 cm (h), Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Sorel Etrog in his Tip Top Tailors studio, Toronto, 1964, photograph by Paul Smith, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

In 1965, Etrog had his first travelling exhibition, which opened at Gallery Moos in Toronto before moving to the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York City, the Felix Landau Gallery in Los Angeles, and terminating at Montreal's Galerie Dresdnère. This four-venue show garnered much attention in Toronto thanks to the inclusion of large-scale works, two of which—*Mother and Child*, 1960–62, and *Capriccio*, 1961–64—were about three metres in height and were installed outside Gallery Moos for the duration of the show, enlivening the Yorkville streetscape and announcing the exhibition to passersby. The Toronto art critic Barrie Hale shrewdly noted that the outdoor display, the choice of monumental works, and the four locations of the show were conscious strategies designed by Etrog and Moos to "enhance Etrog's international reputation."²⁷



LEFT: Sorel Etrog installing *Capriccio*, 1961–64, at Gallery Moos, 1964, photograph by Paul Smith, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog and Pierre Matisse at the opening of Etrog exhibition at Matisse Gallery, 1965, photograph by Fred Stein.



The strategy proved successful. In 1966, Etrog was chosen to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale—one of the most important exhibitions in the art world—along with two painters, Yves Gaucher (1934-2000) and Alex Colville (1920-2013).²⁸ Initially Etrog wanted to exhibit graphic work as well as sculpture, but the Canadian Venice Biennale curator, Willem Blom, decided to focus solely on Etrog's bronze sculpture with nineteen works from the artist's brief yet already diverse career.²⁹ These included the early, more abstract, *War Remembrance II*, 1960-61, and two large-scale sculptures, *Mother and Child*, 1960-62, and *Moses*, 1963-65, which were positioned outside the Canadian pavilion. After Venice, Etrog participated in Expo 67, Montreal's hugely successful international fair, with *Flight*, 1963-64, and *Moses*.³⁰ He returned home to Toronto and contributed two works to the city's large outdoor sculpture exhibition *Sculpture '67*.³¹ Today one of those sculptures, *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967, is installed outside Hart House Gallery and is recognized as a local icon.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog with *Moses*, 1963-65, at Expo 67, Montreal, photographer unknown. RIGHT: *Mother and Child*, 1960-62, in Venice, 1966, photographer unknown.

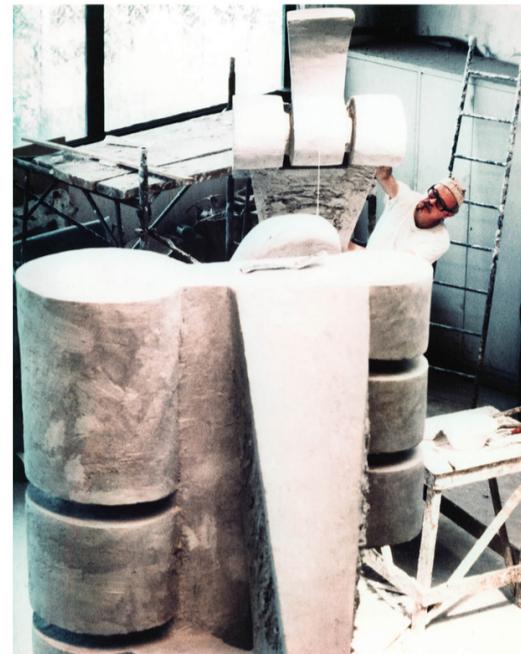
The Biennale enabled Etrog to fulfill a dream he had had since his 1963 trip to Italy—to spend long periods of time in Tuscany.³² In late 1965 he moved to Florence, where he rented both an apartment and a studio. He began casting his work at the renowned Michelucci Foundry in the nearby town of Pistoia, and this is where most of his sculptures would be cast into bronze for the remainder of his career. Living in Italy, Etrog was able to regularly visit his family in Israel. During one of those trips, he met his future wife, Lika Behar, a fashion designer, who soon moved with him to Italy.

Although this period was rich in accomplishments, Etrog also experienced considerable personal difficulties. In Florence he witnessed the 1966 flooding of the Arno River, which killed more than a hundred people and damaged many of the city's historic monuments and art collections. The experience affected the artist tremendously, rekindling traumatic wartime memories. Then, in February 1967, he and Lika were involved in a life-threatening car accident. Lika suffered minor injuries, but Etrog—who was driving—broke both his legs and the middle finger of his right hand.

The recovery, which involved multiple surgeries, took months. During this time Etrog became "discouraged and frustrated." He left Italy, a place he had come to think of as his "second home," shortly thereafter.³³

Back in Toronto, Etrog and Lika married and he rented a studio near the intersection of Yonge and Dundas Streets. In the early 1970s the city had a vibrant scene. The art collective General Idea (active 1969–1994) rented a studio nearby on Yonge Street and, in 1973, opened the artist-run centre Art Metropole. The painter Gershon Iskowitz (1920 or 1921–1988) also had his working space some blocks west, near Spadina and Dundas, among many other artists who lived and worked downtown. But Etrog, then and throughout his life, sought the company most often of men and women of words—writers, philosophers, and academics—as was fitting for a voracious reader with an encyclopedic knowledge of philosophy, poetry, and literature and who collected a library to match.

In 1968, Etrog became a household name in Canada as the designer of the bronze statuette presented to winners at the Canadian Film Awards; it was known as the Etrog until it was renamed the Genie in 1980. A travelling exhibition titled *One Decade* was organized by Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and toured to eleven venues throughout the province of Ontario from 1968 to 1970. It was considered, at least by the AGO's director of education and extension, William C. Forsey, "to be the finest circulating exhibition in the Province."³⁴



LEFT: Moshe, Lika, Tony, and Sorel Etrog during a visit to Venice, Italy, c. 1970s, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog in the Michelucci Foundry, Pistoia, Italy, c. 1973, photographer unknown.



LEFT: The Canadian Film Award, renamed the Genie in 1980, bronze, gold plated, 30.5 x 10.2 cm. RIGHT: Mary Pratt holding a 1989 Genie award in Ottawa, photographer unknown.

NEW BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

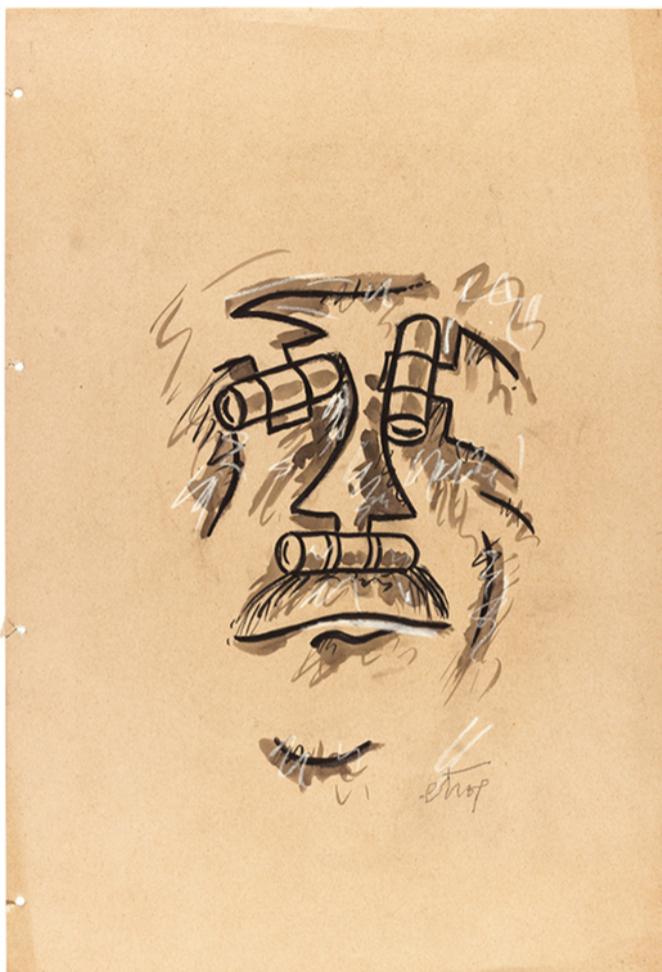
The injuries Etrog sustained in his 1967 car accident and the long recovery took their toll, and the artist experienced an episode of severe depression in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The result was a dark yet powerful period in his art, which he named the Bulls. During this time he made hundreds of black and white drawings depicting bulls in moments of terror, horror, and physical pain, as can be seen in *Targets (Study after Guernica)*, 1969, his potent rendition of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, 1937.



Sorel Etrog, *Study for Targets: Three Caresses*, 1969, charcoal on paper, 77 x 107 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

In 1968, as his injuries were still healing, Etrog returned to Italy and opened another studio in Florence where he found new positive energy, as is reflected in his transition from the dark Bulls works to his short-lived Screws and Bolts period. During this time the artist's work was strongly influenced by Surrealist artists such as Jean Arp (1886–1966), Salvador Dalí (1904–1989), Man Ray (1890–1976), and Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985), and drew inspiration from a humble connecting device, the screw.

In Etrog's next style, called Hinges, which lasted until 1979, the artist continued his exploration of oppositions. These works are characterized by an obvious tension—between movement and stasis—where the primary element of the sculpture, the hinge, is explored. Many of them, such as *Rushman*, 1974–76, or *Pieton*, 1974, depict human figures whose body parts and joints are articulated through the mechanism and appear as if walking. He also created paintings using the motif, and even addressed it in a play that was never performed.³⁵



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Marshall McLuhan*, 1976, charcoal, pastel and ink on paper, sheet: 49.1 x 33.4 cm, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Costume design for dancer from the play *The Celtic Hero: Four Cuchulain Plays by W.B. Yeats*, 1979, photograph by Paul Smith, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

During the 1970s, Etrog became more adventurous in his experimentation and began to make artwork in media that he had not previously used. In 1974, he created the avant-garde film *Spiral*, which explores the human journey from birth to death. This film, which he wrote and directed, was screened on CBC television. It took on a second life when the media theorist Marshall McLuhan collaborated with Etrog on a book that pairs a collage of stills from the film with quotations by modernist writers. In 1978, Etrog designed sets and costumes for the play *The Celtic Hero: Four Cuchulain Plays by W.B. Yeats*, which premiered at the Bayview Playhouse Theatre in Toronto.

Around this same time, Etrog and his gallerist Walter Moos began to pursue public sculptural projects, and his work was commissioned or purchased by large private companies to adorn their offices and headquarters. He developed a relationship with the architect Boris Zerafa, of the firm Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden, who, in 1975, selected two existing works by Etrog for their Bow Valley Square project in Calgary. Five years later, three additional Etrogs were installed there, two purchased by the developers of Bow Valley Square, Hammerson Canada, the third on loan from Gallery Moos.³⁶ Zerafa encouraged Etrog to participate in an international contest to design a sculpture for the Sun Life Insurance Corporation's Toronto headquarters, which his company designed, in the late 1970s. Etrog won the contest and was commissioned to create the iconic *Sun Life* (completed in 1984), a work whose size pushed the artist to incorporate steel into his work in addition to his usual bronze.

The early 1980s were years of change as well as of continued creative experimentation for the artist. In 1980, Etrog and his wife, Lika, divorced, and the artist opened a studio in Paris, where he worked for two years while still maintaining his Toronto studio, now housed in a building at Yonge and Eglinton owned by his close friend and patron the developer Al Green. He curated two exhibitions in Toronto: a group show of twenty-five contemporary Canadian sculptors of large-scale work at the Guild Inn Park in 1982 and the 1984 exhibition of Sam Zack's own paintings—the collector was also an artist—at the Art Gallery of York University, for which Etrog also designed the catalogue, wrote an introductory text, and planned the opening event. His friendship with Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), whom he had met in 1969, gave rise to two collaborative projects during this time. In 1982, Etrog designed and illustrated the limited-edition artist book *Imagination Dead Imagine*, based on a text by Beckett, and in 1984 he created, performed, choreographed, and even composed the electronic music for a performance piece titled *The Bodifestation of the Kite* in celebration of the Irish writer's birthday.

The decade ended with the monumental commission *Powersoul*, which Etrog created for the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. At ten metres tall, this steel construction—stylistically a part of his Hinge period, but using a new material necessitated by his desire to produce works on an even greater scale—is Etrog's largest work.



Sorel Etrog and Samuel Beckett signing *Imagination Dead Imagine*, 1982, in Beckett's Paris studio, photograph by Michael Nguyen.

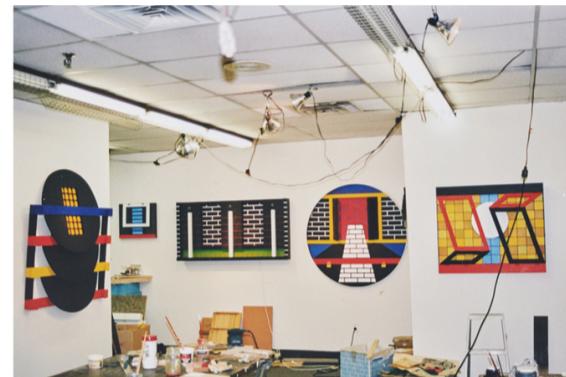
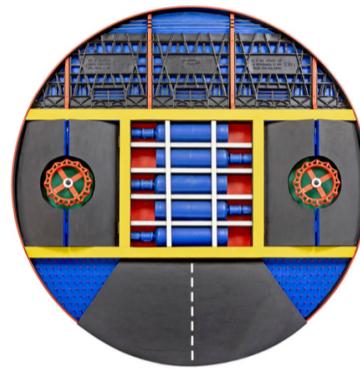


Sorel Etrog, *Powersoul*, 1988, steel, 10.1 m. (h), Government of South Korea Collection, Olympic Park, Seoul, South Korea.

LAST YEARS AND LEGACY BUILDING

Although the 1990s brought accolades for Etrog—he was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 1995 and a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in 1996—it also marked the beginning of a decline in his health and energy. The artist, who had devoted his life to art and was noted for his productivity and innovation, was troubled by his diminishing ability to work and grew reclusive.

In September 1996, Etrog returned to Romania, his country of birth, for the first time in forty-six years. He and his friend the Canadian publisher Howard Aster were invited to participate in a Radio Romania International conference in Bucharest. During this visit a discussion began regarding an Etrog retrospective in the country of his birth. Etrog returned the following year, but the retrospective never came to fruition. These trips affected him greatly. While he didn't return to his hometown of Iași, Etrog spoke about his shock when he discovered that, of the 112 synagogues that once served its thriving Jewish community, only two were left.³⁷



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Composite 12*, 1996-97, acrylic paint, wood, metal, 123.2 x 14 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Composites in Sorel Etrog's studio nearby Yonge and Eglinton, 1997, photograph by Sorel Etrog, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Following his Romanian travels, the artist experienced his last burst of creativity in a series he called the Composites, assemblages made from wood and found materials such as milk crates, nails, and light bulbs. Although their bright colours and geometric shapes might appear to echo the abstraction of Etrog's early Painted Constructions, closer examination reveals that they are filled with references to concentration camps, trains, and gas chambers—reflecting the trauma of his childhood memories rekindled by his return to Romania.

The 2000s saw celebrations of Etrog's work, especially thanks to his Vancouver gallery, Buschlen Mowatt, which held a retrospective in 2003; a show celebrating his early constructions in 2006; and an exhibition in 2008 of his Links paintings, which was filled with works that had never before been exhibited. In 2005, Etrog represented Canada in the inaugural Vancouver Biennale and was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Biennale Board of Directors.



LEFT: Vancouver Biennale Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Sorel Etrog for Sculpture and Public Art, 2005-7, casting of an original maquette by Etrog, *Hinged Spirit*. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *King and Queen*, 1990, painted steel, edition of 2, 304.8 cm (h), Windsor Sculpture Garden. This sculpture was displayed in Harbour Green Park, Coal Harbour, Vancouver, as part of the 2005 Biennale.

In his final years, Etrog began to concentrate on the legacy of his life's work and where it would be housed. He engaged in conversations regarding the creation of a sculpture centre or a museum where his art could be seen and understood in context.³⁸ Several locations for such a place were considered, including Vancouver's Simon Fraser University (which had mounted the 2008 exhibition of the Link paintings), the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's campus, and Art-St-Urbain, in St-Urbain, Lucerne, Switzerland.³⁹ However, none of these options was ultimately chosen.

After Etrog broke his hip and entered Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital in October 2010, he began to envision the creation of a gallery inside the hospital where his artwork would be displayed and patients could find solace. He soon mentioned this idea to Lawrence Bloomberg, then Chair of Mount Sinai Hospital, who set up a meeting between Etrog and collectors Jay and Barbara Hennick. While meeting with them Etrog offered to donate a substantial amount of work, intended to show "his gratitude to the people of Toronto and Canada for allowing him to pursue his lifelong passion for art."⁴⁰ Etrog's vision was fully realized in 2016 with the inauguration of the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery, where sculptures and paintings are on permanent display. Today, the gallery is one of the largest single collections of the artist's work.⁴¹

The year 2010 also saw the first steps toward an Etrog retrospective at the AGO, including discussions regarding housing his papers in the gallery's archives, where they are found today. The retrospective, the final exhibition to be held during Etrog's lifetime, opened in April 2013 and coincided with his eightieth birthday. A few months later he would be hospitalized again. During his last days, he reminisced about his time in New York City and wondered about what might have been had he stayed. Sorel Etrog passed away on February 26, 2014.

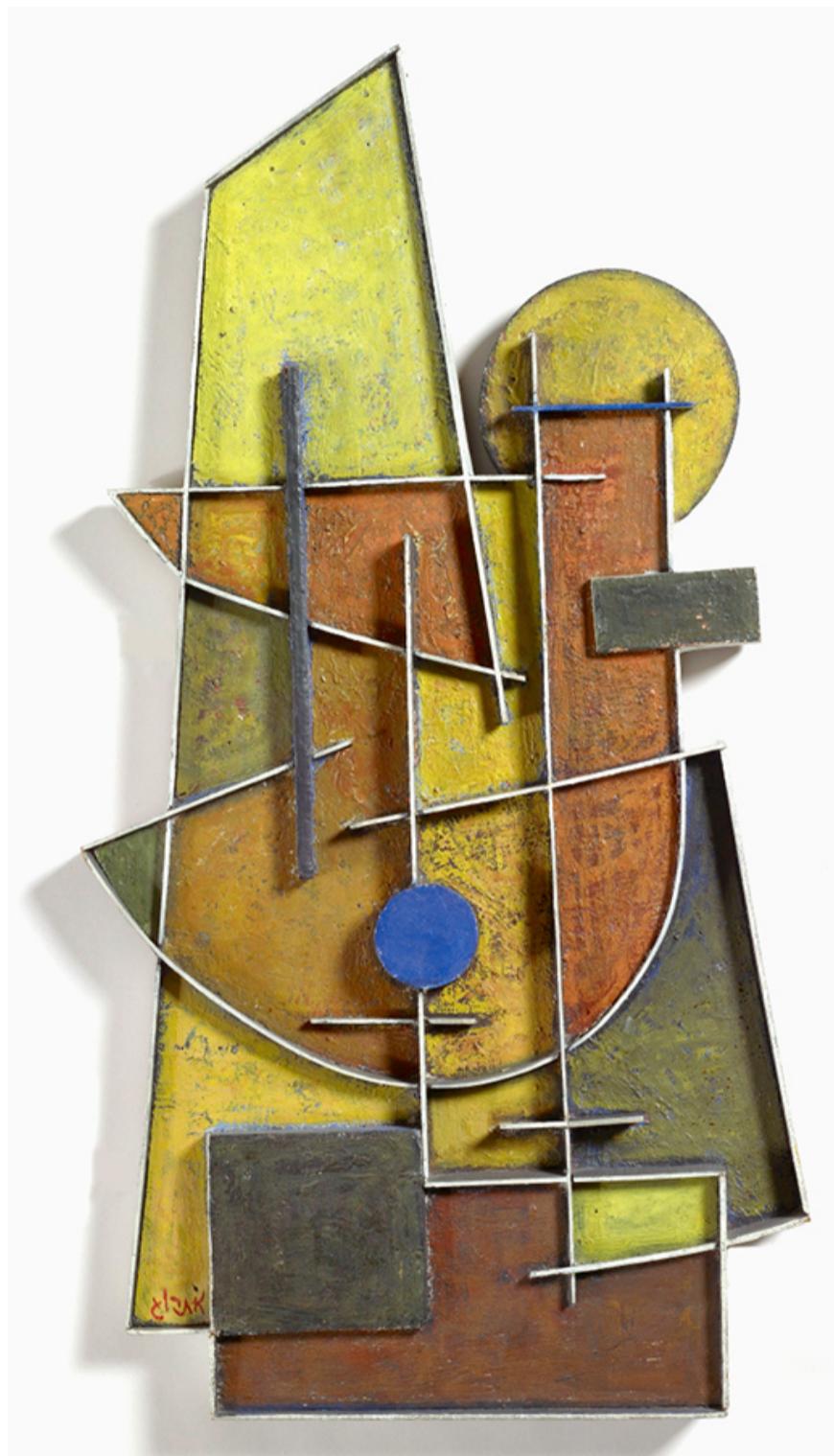


Sorel Etrog working on a plaster cast of *Embrace*, 1961–64, early 1960s, photograph by Paul Smith, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



KEY WORKS

Sorel Etrog is known primarily as a sculptor, but he was a polymath who created, among other works, mixed media, drawings, paintings, performance art, text-based work, and a film. The following selection speaks to his achievements in various media, as well as to the artist's main styles and periods. It also reveals recurring themes and motifs in Etrog's oeuvre, such as his exploration of the human condition through the articulation of tensions between the organic and the mechanical and between stillness and movement, and the celebration of life and contemplation of death.

WHITE SCAFFOLDING 1958**Sorel Etrog, White Scaffolding, 1958**

Oil on wood, overall: 77.5 x 40.6 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

White Scaffolding is a prime example of the Painted Constructions that Etrog created between 1952 and 1960. The work's vertical surface is made of geometric forms—rectangles, triangles, circles—which are assembled to create the piece's irregular shape. A second layer of raised lines includes a protruding circle at the centre of the composition as well as a scaffolding-like pattern, lines that function as a unifying thread and recurring motif in the work, tying it together in a shallow space. Etrog said: "I drew them with a continuous line

that created the final shape.¹ The last step was the addition of colour: he painted this construction in an inharmonious colour scheme; there are areas of yellow, brown, and black contrasted with the blue shade of the central circle. This multiphased process led to works with a distinctive appearance, allowing Etrog to develop his first "signature style."

White Scaffolding is but one work from what Etrog called his Scaffolding series; its grid-like composition makes a reference to Tel Aviv's building boom following the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.² Other works from this period also refer to sites in Etrog's adopted city; *The Harbour I*, 1953, and several works titled *Port*, 1953, for example, allude to the city's vibrant port.

Etrog's rebellious attitude toward artistic convention developed while he was studying with the Dada pioneer Marcel Janco (1895–1984) at Tel Aviv's Arts Institute for Painting and Design. There he was exposed to the work of modern artists who integrated abstraction into their works and to early twentieth-century European avant-garde movements such as Cubism and Constructivism that demanded a broader definition of art.³ He was especially influenced by Paul Klee (1897–1940), as well as Joan Miró (1893–1983) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). During this time Etrog also discovered Modernist music by composers such as Béla Bartók (1881–1945) and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), whose work was characterized by the rejection of harmony, rhythm, and balance. Etrog created the visual equivalent of modernist music by avoiding harmony and symmetry in his constructions and revealed his admiration in the titles of some pieces from this period, for example, *String Quartet (Bartók)*, 1955.

The piece is of key historical significance in Etrog's career. As the legend goes, Etrog was attempting—unsuccessfully—to interest the famed New York art dealer Rose Fried (1896–1970) in some works that he had brought to her gallery, one of which was *White Scaffolding*. The Canadian businessman and art collector Samuel J. Zacks (1904–1970) happened to walk into the gallery and bought the work then and there for \$200. This serendipitous encounter was the starting point of Zacks's life-changing support of Etrog's art and marks the beginning of the artist's rapid rise to fame.



Sorel Etrog with Ayala and Samuel J. Zacks at Etrog's first Canadian one-man show at Gallery Moos, Toronto, 1959, photograph by Anthony Hayman.

WAR REMEMBRANCE II 1960–61



Sorel Etrog, *War Remembrance II*, 1960–61
Bronze, edition of 5, 88.9 x 49.5 x 102.9 cm
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

In *War Remembrance Study*, c. 1959, and its counterpart *War Remembrance II*, Etrog addressed the theme of war and memory, which loomed large in his experience as both a war survivor and a refugee from his homeland.¹ The two *War Remembrances* are similar in composition, orientation, and form; they are primarily horizontal works made up of circular motifs and rounded spirals that meander, revolve, and evolve into and through one another. Both sculptures are built around two vertically oriented, textured circles that face each other at the centre of the work. The smaller one is at the bottom of the composition, resting on the base; the second, larger one is suspended slightly above. The two circles are linked by a triangular shape that resembles a knife, piercing both circles.



These "wheels of the sun" would also appear in later sculptures such as *Sunbird II*, 1962-64, and *Sun Life*, 1984. The motif has a layered symbolic meaning; to the AGO director William Withrow (1926-2018) it stood for both the sun and the wheel; the first is "eternal, omnipresent and absolutely stable," while the latter "suggests mobility and instability."² Etrog used the shapes to explore "the relationship between mass or weight and the base": by having one wheel contact the base and the other "float" he created "a kind of cradle movement, giving the impression of weightlessness, and the optical illusion that they are balanced and stand on their own, independent of the base."³

The elongated, knife-like triangle—a motif that Etrog used earlier in *Hailet*, 1959—is key to the understanding of the two *War Remembrances*, as it shifts their meaning from the purely abstract to the symbolic. The title further evokes this violent theme and alludes to the lingering presence of the Second World War in the artist's psyche as a survivor of both Nazi and Soviet aggression.

Etrog created this work after he transitioned from painted wooden constructions that play between two- and three-dimensions to fully three-dimensional works, a change that occurred during the summer of 1959, which he spent at the Southampton, Ontario, home of his patron, Sam Zacks. There he began sculpting, trying out different materials, such as wood (*The Golem*, 1959), terracotta (*Wings*, 1959), and plaster (*Hasidic Head*, 1959). Some of these and other early experiments such as *Hailet* explore his Jewish-Israeli identity.



Sorel Etrog, *War Remembrance II*, 1960-61, bronze, edition of 5, 43.2 x 104.1 x 57.2 cm, Franklin D. Murphy Sculptural Garden, University of California, Los Angeles.



SOREL ETROG

Life & Work by Alma Mikulinsky

COMPLEXES OF A YOUNG LADY 1962



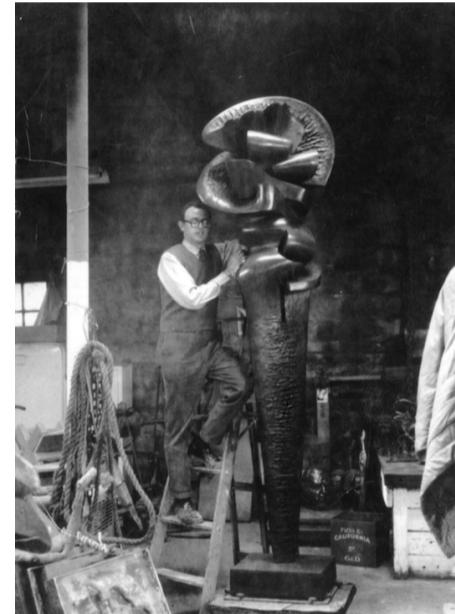
Sorel Etrog, *Complexes of a Young Lady*, 1962

Bronze, edition of 2, 270 x 75 x 52 cm

Hart House Collection, University of Toronto

Complexes of a Young Lady is a primary example of Etrog's biomorphic sculptures, works inspired by organic forms. This piece, like others from the early 1960s, offers a fresh take on the human body; an elongated stem that makes up about three-quarters of the composition is topped by drifting rounded shapes. Etrog drew further inspiration for this elegant combination from objects found in the Oceanic collection of the Brooklyn Museum, specifically the design of lime-wood spatulas from the Messim area of Papua New Guinea, known as *kena*, which have a thin handle and a more voluminous top.¹ As well, his exploration of biomorphic forms recalls those of the Romanian modernist pioneer Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), and of Henry Moore (1898-1986) and Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), artists who were active during these years and whose works were collected by Sam and Ayala Zacks, Etrog's devoted patrons.

Etrog wrote of his shift to an organic vocabulary and a focus on the standing figure as resulting from his desire "to be free to use large masses or weight without them sinking into or flattening on to the base.... I wanted the figure to soar from the base like the trunk of the tree with nothing happening until a short stop at the hips, leaving the drama for the top."² This format occupied the artist in several previous works: the hand-carved *Waterbury*, 1961, and the moulded *Africana*, 1960, and *Blossom*, 1960-61, all created in New York before Etrog's move to Toronto in 1963.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog with *Complexes of a Young Lady*, c.1962, photographer unknown.
RIGHT: Lime spatula (*kena*), twentieth century, wood and lime, 33 cm, Brooklyn Museum, New York.

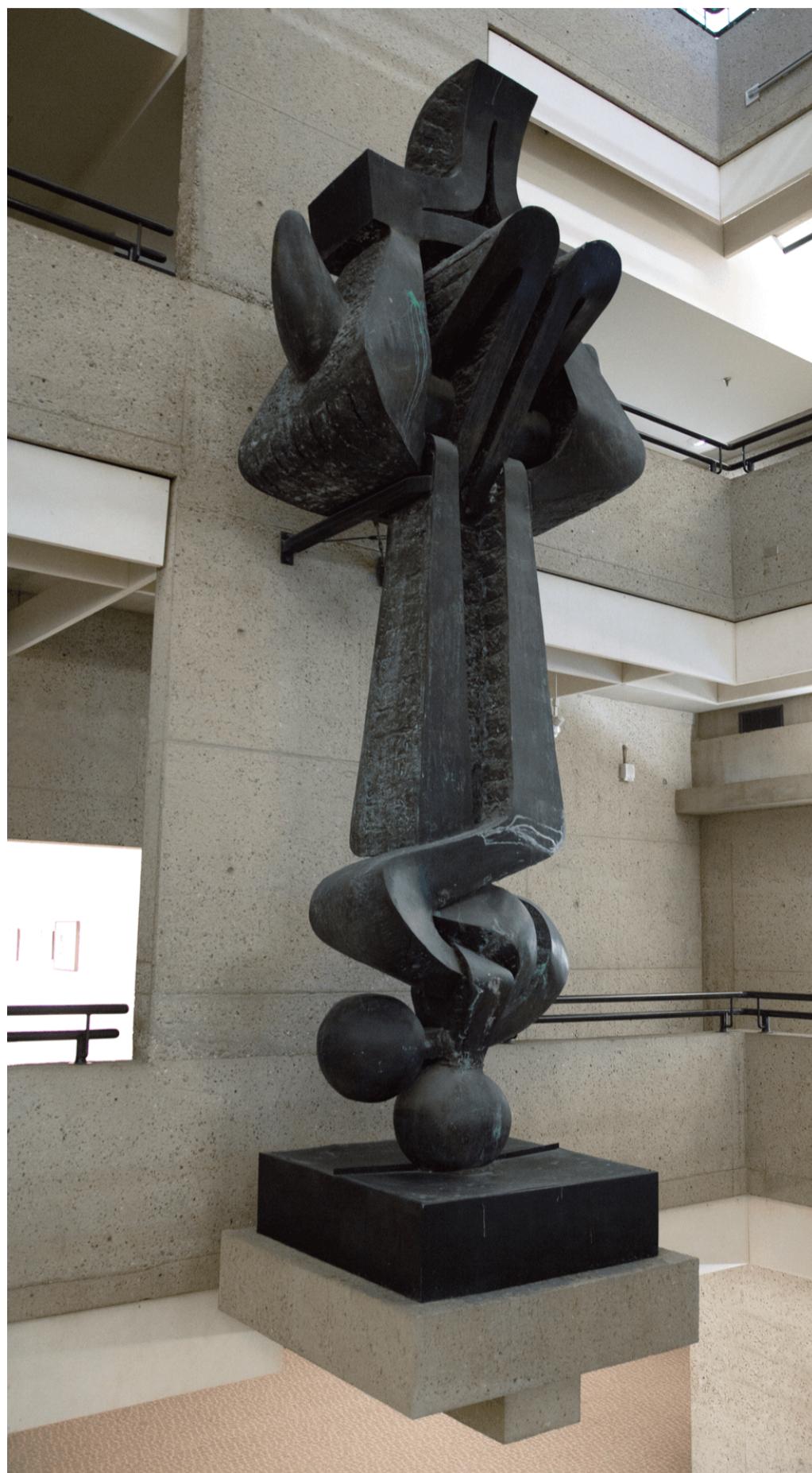


While the dominant style of Etrog's American art school days was Abstract Expressionism, he insisted on finding his own voice, explaining it "was the 'ism' of the time but it didn't affect my work. I was determined to continue in a world of my own making."³ *Complexes* shows how Etrog distanced himself from the approach of sculptors, such as David Smith (1906-1965), who were focused on purely abstract compositions and used welded steel for their creations. With his play between abstraction and figuration as well as his insistence on modelling plaster by hand and casting in bronze, Etrog distinguished himself from the trends of his times.

In *Complexes* Etrog produced a work intended to be seen "in the round." The interlocking forms of the sculpture's top—the continuous folding volumes that swell and relax—lure the viewer into walking around the sculpture to fully appreciate their complexity and dynamism. As one circles the piece, an ever-changing composition of lines, forms, and structures is exposed. *Complexes* is a work that changes from each viewpoint and angle, demonstrating the contrast between stillness and movement, one of many oppositions Etrog explored throughout his career.



MOSES 1963–65



Sorel Etrog, Moses, 1963–65
Bronze, edition of 3, 548.6 cm (h)
University of Lethbridge

Moses is an expression both of Etrog's Jewish identity and of his love of Italy and its art.¹ The sculpture's subject is its title, the Jewish prophet, and takes its cue from the majestic rendition of the biblical figure by Michelangelo (1475–1564). Etrog's composition at first appears abstract, but a careful examination reveals it as a tribute to the sixteenth-century masterpiece.

The work rises from a rectangular pedestal, with one rounded ball sitting directly on the base and another of similar size appearing to float above it, suspended in space. From this seemingly unstable foundation, a tall vertical element, comprising two parallel narrow rectangles, shifts and then rises. The sculpture's upper part replaces the rounded forms of Etrog's earlier sculptures with geometric details; a large triangle is the central point from which other shapes project in different directions, including two that thrust straight ahead and two that curve upward from the sides.



LEFT: Michelangelo, *Moses*, c.1513–15, marble, 235 cm (h), San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.
RIGHT: Canadian Pavilion in Venice with *Moses*, 1963–65, (foreground) and *Mother and Child*, 1960–62 (background), 1966, photograph by Giannina Frugoni.

The two forms protruding forward refer to the tablets of the law that the prophet holds tucked beneath his right arm in Michelangelo's masterpiece and the symmetrical pointy accents emerging from the upper corners echo the horns crowning Moses's head in the Renaissance piece. Even the two twisted ribbons that end in the spheres at the bottom of Etrog's sculpture refer to the elaborate beard that Michelangelo's Moses twirls in his fingers. The sculpture is a testament to Etrog's deep connection to and knowledge of art history translated through his use of a modernist language of abstraction.

Moses is Etrog's first monumental sculpture, reaching over five metres in height, two metres taller than his previous tallest sculpture, *Mother and Child*, 1960–62. Moses's history speaks to its importance in his oeuvre: Moses was first cast in 1964 and was purchased by the Los Angeles County Museum. Another edition of the work was made in 1966 especially for the Canadian pavilion of the Venice Biennale—the plaster was shipped from Toronto and cast in Italy for the show—where the sculpture was situated alongside the aforementioned *Mother and Child*, outside the pavilion.² That cast was then shipped to Montreal, where it was exhibited in Expo 67, the international fair that was visited by more than fifty million people during its six-month run. There is a photo of the artist proudly standing beside *Moses*; it shows that the sculpture had been prominently placed in front of the iconic Biosphere by Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983).



SURVIVORS ARE NOT HEROES 1967



Sorel Etrog, *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967

Bronze, edition of 3, 548.6 cm (h)

Hart House Collection, University of Toronto



Sorel Etrog had explored the theme of war in *War Remembrance II*, 1960–61, but in *Survivors Are Not Heroes* he addressed for the first time the tradition of war memorials. In Canada, as elsewhere in North America and in Europe, war monuments became ubiquitous following the First World War. Communities commissioned sculptures to commemorate their fallen soldiers; one scholar characterized the erection of monuments in Canada during the interwar period as a “monument-building frenzy.”¹ In most cases they depict either fallen soldiers in a realistic manner or symbolic figures to create an allegory for victory or bravery.²

In *Survivors*, Etrog, a victim and survivor of both Nazi aggression in and Soviet occupation of his native Romania, created a work that went against this tradition of public monumental sculpture. He did not replicate the usual heroic message but instead created a stylistically heterogeneous and abstract work that is large in scale and powerful but not celebratory.

The sculpture belongs to an artistic tradition that represents the suffering of innocents and the horrors of war, as seen for example in Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica*, 1937 (which inspired Etrog in another piece), or *The Destroyed City*, 1947–51, by Ossip Zadkine (1890–1967). The title of Etrog’s work reveals the artist’s intention; *Survivors Are Not Heroes* does not memorialize fallen soldiers but rather speaks of those who have lived through war. The style and composition of Etrog’s work provide a metaphor for the complex emotions that result from the traumatic experiences of war survivors, feelings that often include guilt and shame as well as grief and anger, as opposed to the heroic associations of victory.

Structurally, *Survivors* is composed of four very distinct layers that are connected through a relationship of tension and contrast. At the bottom we find the “wheel of the sun” motif, which also appears in *War Remembrance*, 1960–61, *Sunbird II*, 1962–64, and *Sun Life*, 1984, and produces the “optical illusion that... [the sculpture is] balanced and stand[s] on [its] own, independent of the base.”³ On top of this large circular element and emerging from it, a network of links intertwine, holding each other in position as well as providing a sense of movement and energy. Above it is a horizontal rectangular shape, a stark geometric form that contrasts with the lower part’s rounded motifs. The sculpture culminates in a tall vertical element that makes up about half of the work and draws the viewer’s eyes upward, suggesting hope.

Survivors Are Not Heroes, at a height of more than five metres, is one of the largest bronze sculptures Etrog ever created. It is a Toronto icon for both its location at the downtown St. George Campus of the University of Toronto and its inclusion in the important exhibition *Sculpture ’67*, which took place in Nathan Phillips Square in front of City Hall as a part of Canada’s Centennial celebrations.⁴



Walter S. Allward, *Canadian National Vimy Memorial*, 1922–36, white limestone, 40 x 75 m, Vimy Ridge National Historic Site of Canada, Givenchy-en-Gohelle, France, Government of Canada.

TARGETS (STUDY AFTER GUERNICA) 1969



Sorel Etrog, *Targets (Study after Guernica)*, 1969

Graphite on paper, 150 x 366 cm

The Estate of Sorel Etrog

Targets (Study after Guernica) is a large black and white drawing that depicts nine bulls in various positions that express an all-encompassing distress and pain originating from an unclear source. The animals—or “targets” according to the title—are depicted through a disordered composition. At the drawing’s centre, a pregnant cow collapses while raising its head in a scream. In the top left corner an upside-down bull looks as if it is falling. On the right side, another carries a lifeless calf in its mouth while several fragmented bovine figures appear throughout the drawing, adding to the sense of confusion.

The title of the work reveals Etrog’s homage to Pablo Picasso (1880–1973). The two never met, but Etrog had admired the Spanish artist’s work since his art-school days in Tel Aviv. Like many before him, including Picasso himself, Etrog set out to reinterpret masterpieces of Western art in his own distinct style. As he later said, “After years of refining and solidifying my vocabulary... I was confident that it was personal enough to be able... to adapt, translate and make variations of some well-known masterpieces.”¹



Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 349.3 x 776.6 cm, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid.

In *Targets*, Etrog specifically refers to Picasso’s *Guernica*, 1937, which was on display at The Museum of Modern Art in New York when Etrog lived in the city.



Guernica is an essentially black and white painting that combines a Cubist style and a Surrealist deformation of bodies to portray an air raid on a civilian population during the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). Picasso focuses on the bombing's abrupt disruption of daily life in the Basque town by depicting the attack's violent aftermath—a dead baby in his distraught mother's arms, corpses strewn on the ground, figures being burned alive, as well as a bull fearfully witnessing the horror.

Etrog created the work during a particularly dark time in his life. In 1966 he had witnessed the flooding of the Arno River, which devastated Florence and brought back memories of the destruction that he himself had witnessed during the Second World War, and, in 1967, he was in a life-threatening car accident that would take many years to fully recover from. In 1969, after studying the bullfighting scenes in *La Tauromaquia*, 1816, a series of prints by Francisco Goya (1746–1828), Etrog embarked on a period of about two years during which the bull motif dominated his work, appearing in hundreds of paintings, sketches, studies, and fragments, as well some sculptures of varying sizes. *Targets* is the largest drawing of the period.

Etrog borrows Picasso's scale, colour palette, and overall formal arrangement in *Targets*, interpreting *Guernica* to express his own anguish. First, he populates the composition with bulls in place of the human characters of the original. Second, using his Links style, which merges the organic and mechanical through repeated interlocking rounded forms, he blurs the distinction between figures and ground and between the figures themselves, creating an atmosphere of chaos and confusion. The motif of the link is also used to depict the bulls' muzzles and jaws, thus producing repeated images of locked, unreleased screams.² Finally, while Picasso's composition responds to the fact that *Guernica* was bombed from the sky, Etrog avoids representing the source of the horrors and instead produces a visually chaotic composition of whirling forms and unclear boundaries, in which the danger seems to come from everywhere at once. Etrog's *Targets*, while triggered by the artist's personal experience, evokes universal suffering and tragedy.

SADKO 1971–72

Sorel Etrog, Sadko, 1971-72
Painted bronze, 365.8 cm (h)
Bow Valley Square Collection, Calgary



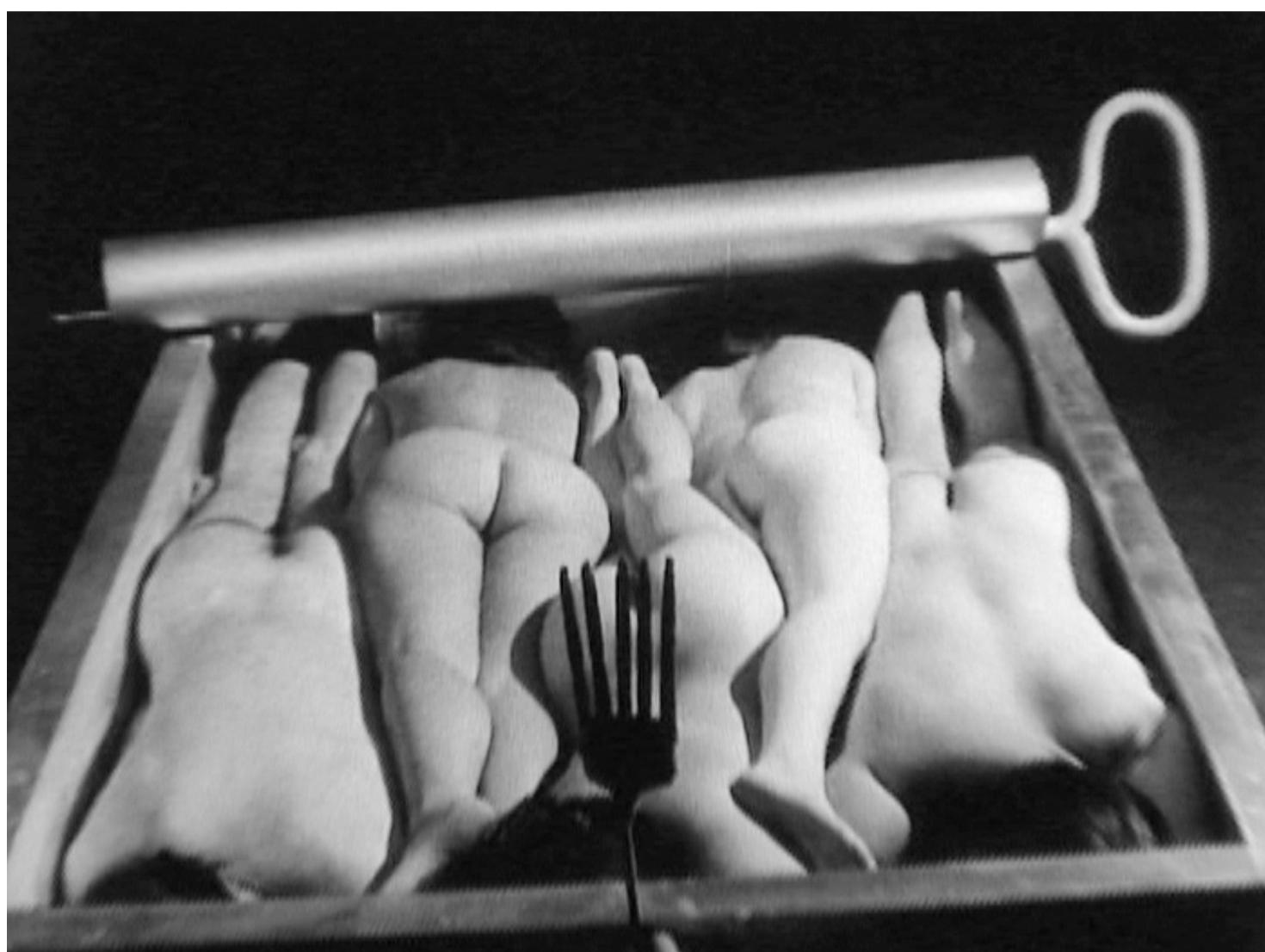
Sadko, named after a character from the epic Russian classic *bylina*, is one of the best examples of Etrog's Screws and Bolts period (1971-73), during which the artist created sculptures characterized by visual wit, sexual references, and vibrant shiny colours (achieved by applying automotive enamel paint to the bronze surface, in this case a bright red). In this brief phase of his career, Etrog was inspired by mechanical elements similar to those he had explored earlier, during his Links period (1963-70), and ones he would continue to explore during the Hinges period (1972-79) with which Screws and Bolts overlaps.

Etrog's Screws and Bolts interlude immediately followed the dark period in his life that resulted in such works as the anguished *Targets (Study after Guernica)*, 1969. It is as if the artist, recovering from a serious 1967 car accident that required a series of operations, finally became hopeful about the possibility of healing and emerged from a difficult time with renewed life-affirming energy. The sculptures are influenced by Surrealism, with its focus on bold erotic themes, sensual subject matter, and explicit representations of sexual acts.¹ The bright red *Sadko*, for example, suggests a male figure with extended arms and legs and an erect penis.

When the sculptures were first displayed at Toronto's Dunkelman Gallery, the *Globe and Mail* critic Kay Kritzwiser alluded to their explicit subject matter and eroticism as she attempted to counter possible criticism, arguing that "Etrog concedes sexuality perhaps, deliberate sexiness no, physicality yes."² Despite the piece's boldness—or perhaps because of it—the architect Boris Zerafa of Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden selected *Sadko* to be installed, coupled with the bright yellow *Kabuki*, 1971-72, at Bow Valley Square, Calgary's iconic office tower complex, which his firm had designed. These two works immediately became a sculptural couple, with *Kabuki* standing for a female and *Sadko* for a male. Painted in different but equally vivid colours, they face the street and engage passing foot traffic.³

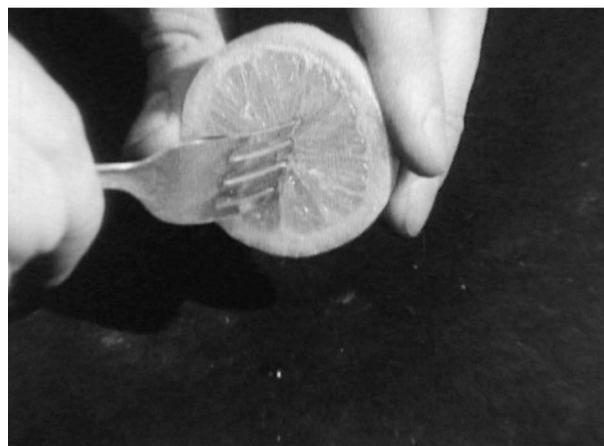


Sorel Etrog, *Kabuki* (right), 1971-72, painted bronze, 365 cm (h), Bow Valley Square Collection, Calgary.

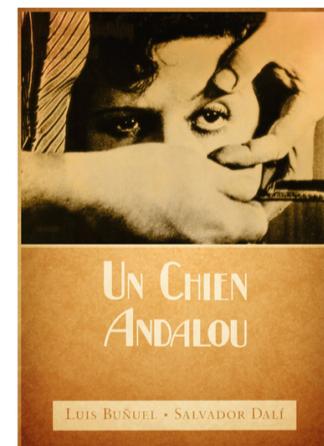
SPIRAL 1974**Sorel Etrog, *Spiral*, 1974**

16mm film, black and white, sound, 34 min.
The Estate of Sorel Etrog

Spiral, Etrog's only foray into filmmaking, provides a powerful meditation on the human condition and the journey from birth to death. This venture into cinema resulted from Etrog's experiments in playwriting: according to one writer he wrote a series of plays titled *Hinges* in 1968-69 that were never performed; the fourth and last of these became the source for *Spiral*.¹



LEFT: Still from Sorel Etrog, *Spiral*, 1974, The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Poster of *Un chien andalou* for CBC television.



The film borrows from European experimental filmmaking. Surrealist cinema used powerful images and unsettling visual equivalences to great effect, as in *Un chien andalou*, 1929, by Luis Buñuel (1900-1983) and his collaborator,

Salvador Dalí (1904–1989). Likewise, Constructivist cinema's montage editing technique invented by the Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948) in the 1920s, as seen in his *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925, was a profound influence. Both styles are evident in *Spiral*.

To Etrog, one's path from birth to death is not a linear journey but rather one that is experienced through the spiral, the film's main motif. This form collapses time and space: the birth of a child is juxtaposed with an open-heart surgery, the pram is compared with the coffin, and images of a ticking clock repeatedly appear.² The theme of the impossibility of separating life neatly from death is further expressed in one of *Spiral*'s most powerful images: as the protagonist opens a box of sardines, we encounter intertwining naked bodies, which later in the film will be juxtaposed with interlocked wriggling worms, recalling images of mass graves.

"I chose a spiral because I didn't want to close the circle," Etrog said in a conversation with his friend and later collaborator, the influential media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911–1990).³ Elsewhere, he explained that "[t]he spiral is a single continuous line that creates within itself a parallel that exists conventionally between two lines. Therefore, you can have on this single line moments in time and space that signify the past, the present, and the future."⁴



Stills from Sorel Etrog, *Spiral*, 1974, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

Spiral was first shown on the CBC television program *Sprockets* in 1975. In the 1980s, McLuhan screened *Spiral* at the University of Toronto's Centre of Culture and Technology, and suggested to Etrog that they collaborate on a book project based on the film. Etrog agreed and selected stills from it. Later, McLuhan chose annotations and quotations from famous modernist writers who had influenced Etrog, such as Samuel Beckett (1906–1989), Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994), and James Joyce (1882–1941). The final result, which was published in 1987, is an artwork in its own right, a collage of images coupled with texts that functions as a conversation between the artist and the theorist.⁵



SOREL ETROG

Life & Work by Alma Mikulinsky

RUSHMAN 1974-76



Sorel Etrog, *Rushman*, 1974-76

Bronze, edition of 7, 157.5 cm

Miriam Shiell Fine Art, Toronto



Rushman—as its name suggests—depicts a figure whose posture gives the impression of a rushed walking pace. This illusion is enhanced by the position of its legs and tilted-back elements that suggest the figure is marching ahead with energy and speed. It is a key example of Etrog's Hinges period, which lasted through most of the 1970s. During this time Etrog made extensive use of the mechanism in both sculpture and paintings and explored the representation of opposing forces by focusing on the problem of how to express movement without actual motion.

In *Rushman*, both the figure's legs and arms are connected by visible hinges; they represent its joints, though they do not move. Although Etrog was, as always, intrigued by the tools and symbolism of connection, the hinge was unique in offering the possibility of connecting elements to a flat surface, thus allowing him for the first time to represent walking figures. With this sculpture, Etrog entered the territory of the famed Italian avant-garde sculptors such as the Futurist Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916) and the Surrealist Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), both of whom devoted portions of their oeuvre to the depiction of the human form in motion. It is also a nod to *Walking Woman*, 1967, by Michael Snow (b. 1928), an important iteration of his series that was included, along with two Etrog sculptures, in Expo 67.

Etrog called *Rushman* and other similar works from this period Extroverts, explaining that they "are concerned with open space and implied movement."¹ This idea was highlighted when, in 1976, a medium-size version of the sculpture, together with its fellow Extroverts *Pistoya (Mother and Child)*, 1973–76, *Steptease*, 1976, and the monumental *Pieton*, 1974, were temporarily placed in the city square of Pistoia, the Italian town where Etrog cast his sculptures at the Michelucci Foundry. Positioned in the piazza next to the medieval baptistery, they appear to belong to the city's urban fabric, as if integrated into the movement of each passersby.



Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, bronze, 111.2 x 88.5 x 40 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

DREAM CHAMBER 1976



Sorel Etrog, *Dream Chamber*, 1976
Bronze, edition of 3, 157.5 cm (h)
MacLaren Art Centre, Barrie, Ontario

Dream Chamber is arguably the most important sculpture of Etrog's Hinges period (1972-79). Like other examples from this creative moment, where the structural device is used to connect different elements, it embodies the idea of representing motion through a work that cannot move.

Dream Chamber—which was lent to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1983 and located until the summer of 2017 in the garden of the Canadian prime minister's official Ottawa residence at 24 Sussex Drive—is a globe whose surface is composed of several hinged doors waiting to be opened. This is of course not possible, as *Dream Chamber*'s rounded sphere is permanently locked, its hinges forever closed. The sculpture's form and name suggest the existence of an inner world that is always inaccessible to the viewer.



LEFT: Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and Sorel Etrog with *Dream Chamber*, 24 Sussex Drive, Ottawa 1983, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Study for Dream Chamber*, c.1976, charcoal on paper, 47 cm x 60 cm, private collection.



While Etrog characterized *Rushman*, 1974–76, another important work from the Hinges period, as an Extrovert piece for its exploration of movement in an open space, *Dream Chamber* belongs to a group that Etrog called Introverts, “a tongue-in-cheek reference to their closed forms.” In the artist’s view, these sculptures contained “inner chambers [that] have a mysterious existence, where memories and images from dreams are stored.” He went on to describe how in this body of work “the hinges only suggest the possibility that the ambiguous inner world may be opened and revealed.”¹ For Etrog, it was necessary that certain doors remained sealed.



SUN LIFE 1984



Sorel Etrog, *Sun Life*, 1984
Bronze sheet and steel, 848.6 cm (h)
Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, Toronto

Sun Life is one of Etrog's best-known sculptures, thanks to its great size and its commanding location in the centre of the plaza on the northeast corner of the busy Toronto intersection of King Street and University Avenue. The work presents a relationship between two opposing worlds: the heaviness of its rounded bottom—a "wheel of the sun" motif, which Etrog first explored in sculptures from the early 1960s—anchors the sculpture in the ground, while its vertical top, comprising geometric rectangular forms connected by a series of hinges, seems to pull the piece upward. The fifteen-tonne work measures some eight and a half metres in height, four metres in width, and is three metres deep. It is supported by a two-square-metre, two-thousand-kilogram plate buried beneath the granite paving of the plaza.

Etrog won the commission for the headquarters of the Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada following a three-year international competition during which he engaged in his own intensive three-year-long process, creating at least twenty studies in wax from which he selected the one that became *Sun Life*.¹ It was the first truly large-scale sculpture that Etrog fabricated in Canada, working with Toronto's Hyland Fabricators, as opposed to his usual practice of working with the Italian Michelucci Foundry. The artist and the local foundry had to overcome several technical challenges. First, because of its size, the piece could not be cast in bronze as a single unit as Etrog would usually have done, but rather was constructed by laying bronze sheets over a steel armature. Second, the gigantic bronze wheel that anchored the piece had to be produced in the United States, as the Canadian foundry did not have the right equipment for its 170-centimetre diameter. And finally, the welding presented difficulties due to the alloy used.

In his speech at the sculpture's dedication ceremony, Etrog touched on the problems of public art's reception and of changing taste. He noted that Toronto lacked public sculpture, despite the existence of many talented local sculptors, and urged city planners, corporations, and developers to invest in this form of art: "Let us not be intimidated nor overrated. Some [sculptures] will be more successful than others, like the building surrounding them. Not every building is a great work of architecture. Yet we need buildings and we need sculptures as well."²



Sorel Etrog in his Yonge and Eglinton studio with studies for the *Sun Life* project, 1981–83, Toronto, photographer unknown.

THE BODIFESTATION OF THE KITE 1984



Sorel Etrog, *The Bodifestation of the Kite* (installation view at Grunwald Gallery, Toronto), 1984

Performance with Gloria Luoma at Grunwald Gallery, Toronto

Various media including drawing, dance, and music

On Friday April 13, 1984, Etrog celebrated the seventy-eighth birthday of his friend the author Samuel Beckett. Instead of throwing a party, Etrog created a performance piece that included, among other elements, a poem he had written for Beckett and paintings done "with Beckett in mind."¹ This one-night, once-in-a-lifetime event was sponsored by Etrog's long-time gallerist, Walter Moos, and took place at the Grunwald Gallery on Spadina Avenue in downtown Toronto. Beckett was not present, so Etrog channelled him as a source of inspiration and acknowledged their decades-long friendship and the creative collaboration that stemmed from it.

This multimedia celebration was a complex affair. In front of an audience of about 150, Etrog inscribed his poem "The Kite" onto nine large panels, illustrating each verse with an image of a human figure.² The panels were done quickly, in "less time than it takes to smoke a cigarette." Etrog explained that the speed was necessary to "get away from... showing that I know how to draw."³ The illustrations appeared to be spontaneous, but Etrog actually invested much time and effort in conceptualizing and preparing for the live performance. He tested several variations of the figure until he reached the



final design, then rehearsed the body and posture over and over again until he memorized them well enough to reproduce them live.⁴

Etrog also made architectural drawings of the Grunwald Gallery, imagining the space, the setting, the lighting, and where the audience would sit. He created a nine-stage "visual concept" for the dancer who would perform the choreography he had created, which was set to recorded music he had composed. Veronica Tennant was originally going to be that dancer, but due to injury was replaced at the last minute by Gloria Luoma, also of the National Ballet of Canada. Luoma began the performance wrapped like a mummy in a two-and-a-half-metre-long black satin ribbon and gradually unravelled herself in a slow, enchanting dance. Robert O'Driscoll, a University of Toronto professor and a friend of Etrog's who was present at the performance, called it "a kind of resurrection ritual."⁵

The kite of the work's title was evoked in the movement of the dancer, who, at a certain point, appeared suspended, held only by a black ribbon like a kite on its string. The image also appeared in Etrog's poem in reference to Beckett's physiognomy ("pale coloured ricepaper / pasted carefully, on / the same bony frame"). The theme of the poem, which inspired the performance as a whole, is the tragic repetitiveness of daily life:

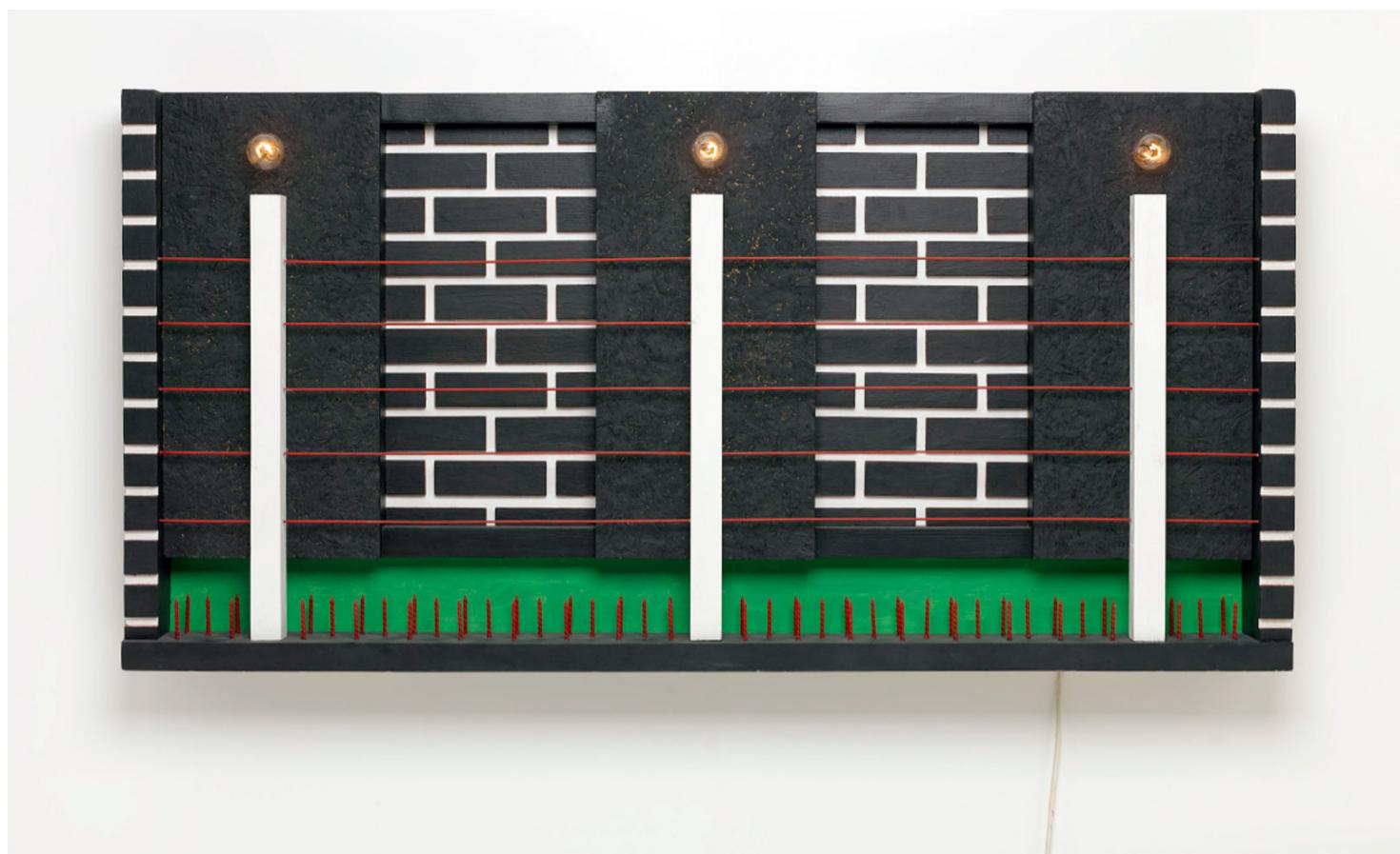
The same. fields
mountains, the same.
the same postcard
bedside, the same.
the same time.
clocks, the same

This "total work of art" was described by Joyce Zemans as a unique event, "a dramatic, visual, literary, and music experience, the like of which has seldom been seen in Toronto," leading the art historian to call for a re-evaluation of Etrog's body of work: "The Kite has clearly indicated that [Etrog's] medium is restricted to neither marble or metal. From words, line, music, light and dance Etrog has fashioned a brilliant and moving artwork."⁶ The performance piece had a second and third life: the drawings were exhibited at Gallery Moos in Toronto and were also published in book form, with editions in Italian and French.⁷



Reproductive copy of detail from *The Bodifestation of the Kite*, 1984, photocopy, 21.6 x 27.9 cm, Sorel Etrog fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

COMPOSITE 14 1996–97



Sorel Etrog, *Composite 14*, 1996-97

Wood and plywood, particle board, metal rod and screws, incandescent lamps and electrical fixtures, acrylic paint, 150 x 12 x 189.2 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Sorel Etrog's final burst of creativity, a series that he called Composites, returned to his very first body of work, the flat yet geometrically rich Painted Constructions of the 1950s. Like those early pieces, *Composite 14* and its related works are meant to hang on the wall. He became inspired while visiting his cousin Sylvia Federman and her husband, Burton, in Florida in 1996: "Burt had a garage with more tools than any sculptor I knew. I found myself in his garage making my first wood constructions since the 1950s."¹ On returning to Toronto he began collecting not only scraps of wood but also such ready-made objects as plastic milk crates, rubber doormats, and light bulbs, which he combined to create his colourful geometric collages.

Composite 14 is a flat rectangular assemblage with several relief elements layered on its surface. Its composition is balanced and geometric, with a primarily horizontal orientation. At the bottom of the piece, and stretched across the work's surface, is a band of green paint placed under an intermittent black and white brick pattern and five red metal lines that transect the whole work, anchored in place by three white vertical posts topped with glowing light bulbs. Two rows of short red nails are hammered into the bottom frame of the piece and stand upright in front of the green band.

In 1996, Etrog returned to his country of birth, Romania, for the first time in forty-six years. Although he did not go to his hometown of Iasi, a visit to a prisoner-of-war camp brought back painful memories.² The Composites draw on this experience as well as his traumatic childhood growing up as a Jew in anti-Semitic Romania during the Second World War and the later Soviet occupation. The vertical and horizontal forms in *Composite 14* bring to mind electric fences, barbed wire, walls, and other physical barriers that surrounded the concentration camps, those spaces of death and torture used by the Nazis to eradicate the Jewish population of Europe.

The thin red lines stretched between white poles appear like a fence, and the working light bulbs suggest searchlights. The short red nails at the bottom add to the sense of impassability, just as the layered bricks present an enclosed space with no openings. Other works in the series suggest prison cells and deportation trains, even the gas chambers themselves.

The Composites were first exhibited at Christopher Cutts Gallery in Toronto in 2000. In the exhibition catalogue Etrog's friend the art critic Gary Michael Dault interprets the pieces in stylistic terms, arguing that they present a retrospective summary of the artist's career:

Here, for example, is a checklist of Etrogisms—echoes and remodulations of the artist's working vocabulary—present in the composites: hinges—an evolution of the link, so prevalent in classic Etrog sculpture of the 60s and 70s.... Deep glossy colour (the kind of colour borne by the Composites acknowledges the shiny, baked and buffed automobile-enamel of, for example, the Screws and Bolts sculptures of the early 70s). Severe geometric planes, shaped and acknowledged for their own formal power and powerfully juxtaposed—as in the new, radically simplified steel wall sculptures of the early 80s.³

This formalist interpretation fails to take into account the subject matter of the Composites; they were directly related to both recent and long-past events in the artist's personal life. The art historian Joyce Zemans, also a friend of Etrog's, interpreted the works in light of his biography. To her, their composition and formal arrangement are not abstract, nor are they "the random associations of the Dadaists. The objects evoke the violence that has, for the most part, lain hidden below the surface in Etrog's work.... The composites are, in fact, layered and coded with meaning."⁴



Sorel Etrog, *Composite 18*, 1996–97, wood, acrylic paint, plywood, hardboard, foam packing material, metal hinges, and valve handles, door closed: 124.7 x 8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Sorel Etrog's career was unique among Canadian artists of his time. Although based primarily in Canada from the early 1960s until his death in 2014, he exhibited in the world's most prestigious galleries and museums and maintained a lively and productive dialogue with leading international artists, curators, and critics—many of whom he collaborated with on artworks in various media. Indeed, Etrog is best understood in the context of early twentieth-century and interwar European avant-garde art movements and the popular philosophies of the postwar years.

CHILD OF WAR

Sorel Etrog was only six years old when the Second World War broke out in Europe and eleven when the Soviet army occupied Iași, his hometown in Romania. The Jewish community of Iași suffered greatly from state-organized violence and anti-Semitism, and the Etrog family experienced cruelty, hunger, and poverty. When the family tried to escape from Romania, Etrog's parents were imprisoned, leaving him—a thirteen-year-old boy—in charge of his five-year-old sister for a period of several months. Such hardships ended when the family immigrated to Israel in 1950.



Jewish residents of Iași, Romania were murdered in the streets in June 1941 after the start of the Second World War, photographer unknown.

Etrog's childhood traumas undoubtedly shaped him. He only sporadically represented war, violence, and suffering directly in his art, but it is nevertheless a recurring motif of great importance that sheds light on his body of work. His experience as a child of war was first addressed by his working within the tradition of war monuments, prevalent in Europe and North America after the two world wars. *War Remembrance Study*, c.1959, and *War Remembrance II*, 1960–61, are two important examples.¹ Both are abstract sculptures that refer to war violence in title and form, as can be seen by the elongated dagger that pierces the sculptures' round elements. In *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967, Etrog followed the tradition of war memorials in the sculpture's size but used it to explore the complex emotions of ordinary survivors rather than to glorify the heroism of fallen soldiers.

In 1966, when Etrog was living and working in the Italian city of Florence, he witnessed the flooding of the Arno River, which killed more than a hundred people and damaged many of the city's historic monuments and art collections. The experience affected him emotionally and artistically, he confessed:

[T]hese recent experiences brought back to me the war days. I was quite shocked and numb. I am witnessing how these past immediate experiences are getting in my new work. I feel so many things happening in my work, I would have liked to run away from here yet I am in the middle of this development and I should let my work continue even if the circumstances here became so difficult.²



Sorel Etrog, *War Remembrance Study*, c.1959, bronze, 14 x 215.9 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

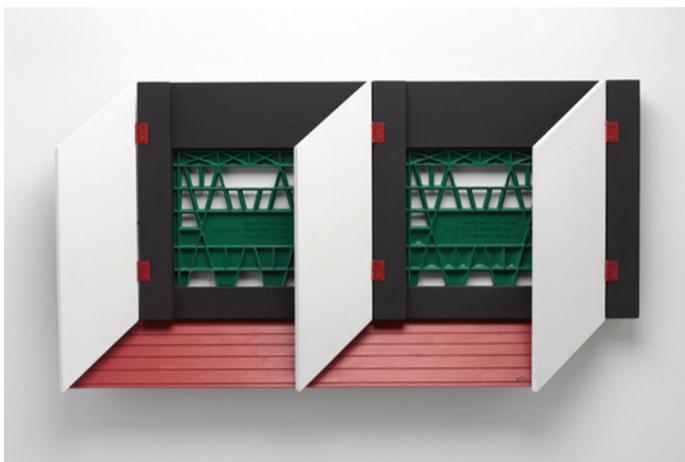
The effect of war is most fully explored in Etrog's brief Bulls period of 1969–70, when he became devoted to the depiction of harsh and violent subject matter. This intention can be seen vividly in the drawing *Targets (Study after Guernica)*, 1969, his interpretation of the monumental antiwar painting *Guernica*, 1937, by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), in which Etrog emphasizes chaos and confusion. Another example of direct representation of the effects of war and violence is

in Etrog's slightly earlier painting *Biafra*, 1968. The composition of this work was inspired by a photograph that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* depicting a mother holding two starved children during the 1967-70 civil war in Biafra, Nigeria, where famine was used as a weapon.³ The three figures are merged into a single mass that seems to be flayed of skin as the artist uses the motif of the link to represent both internal organs and bones.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Biafra*, 1968, oil on canvas, 195 x 114 cm, collection of James Dawson. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Night Spirit*, 1969-70, oil on canvas, 78.7 x 177.8 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

Etrog did not address the theme of war again for a period of about thirty years until, in 1996, he returned to Romania for the first time since he and his family had left the country for good in 1950. The visit brought back painful memories, but it also sparked Etrog's final body of work, which he called Composites. These are assemblages made of wood and found objects that refer to the trains, barbed-wire fences, prison cells, and concentration camps of the Second World War and the Holocaust. According to Etrog's close friend the art historian Joyce Zemans, these images reveal what "[lay] hidden below the surface in Etrog's work," exposing the importance of Etrog's childhood experiences and the trauma in his art.⁴



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Composite 11*, 1996–97, wood, acrylic paint, plastic, metal, overall: 58.7 x 111.7 x 18.2 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Romanian police walk past the bodies of Jews removed from the Iași-Calarasi death train in Targu-Frumos, July 1, 1941, photographer unknown.

RENEWING TRADITION IN MODERN ART

As one of Canada's leading artists of the 1960s, Sorel Etrog played an important role in the rise of the country's interest in sculpture. In a 1962 *Canadian Art* editorial Alan Jarvis (1915–1975), former director of the National Gallery of Canada, commented on the "paucity" of the Canadian sculptural scene, but the critic Hugo McPherson noted in a 1964 *Canadian Art* article that contemporary Canadian sculptors were moving ahead of the country's painters, advancing sculpture by searching for new styles, materials, and means of expression.⁵ Etrog was included in McPherson's essay but in many ways appeared to be operating within a different artistic framework than his fellow artists. McPherson noted that Canadian sculptors were using "new media and a new, less subjective vocabulary of forms," but Etrog continued to work in bronze—in use as a sculptural material since about 2500 BCE—and to employ its traditional labour-intensive casting techniques to create a highly individual repertoire that grew out of the artist's personal associations, artistic influences, and intellectual interests in the subject matter of the avant-garde. So while he rejected tradition from a compositional sense, he embraced a traditional artistic medium to execute his vision.

The AGO director William Withrow (1926–2018) addressed this quality and its impact on the reception of Etrog's oeuvre in his 1967 book about the artist:

The work of Sorel Etrog is a rare phenomenon in the art world of 1966. All around us artists talk about the advantages of using one kind of coloured plastic as against another, the superior brilliance of a certain brand of fluorescent [sic] paint on the best kind of fractional horsepower motor.... The whole atmosphere of this competitive and entertaining search for novelty is foreign to Etrog. Thus when a jury of professional art experts was recently convened to choose a number of contemporary Canadian sculptors for a large commission, it was immediately suggested by at least one member that Etrog's name be eliminated out of hand because he works in the "old-fashion[ed] medium of bronze"!⁶



Sorel Etrog, *Sunbird II*, 1962–64, bronze, 199.5 x 89.9 x 68.3 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

This distinctiveness becomes especially clear when comparing Etrog's two contributions to the important Toronto outdoor art exhibition *Sculpture '67*, a watershed exhibition for public sculpture in Canada, to those of his peers. *The Couple*, c.1966, and *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967, are powerful bronze sculptures that Etrog created without assistants. Other contributors to the *Sculpture '67* show, Robert Bladen (1918-1988) and Robert Murray (b.1936), on the other hand, proudly outsourced the production of their work to metal fabricating plants, a common practice among Minimalist artists of the time. While Etrog's works metaphorically expressed a deep anti-war sentiment (*Survivors Are Not Heroes*) and the search for human connection (*The Couple*), Bladen's contribution, *The Rockers*, 1965, was absent of symbolism. Similarly, Murray's contribution, *Cumbria*, 1966-67, was intended to convey "a feeling for two pieces of steel weighing five tons that can be understood as a long narrow line one moment and a hanging heavy slab or a weightless spread of color the next."⁷



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Couple IV '65 Study*, 1965, bronze, edition of 10, 33 cm (h), The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967, bronze, edition of 3, 548.6 cm (h), Hart House Collection, University of Toronto.

Other works in the *Sculpture '67* show, such as *First, Last* by Michael Snow (b.1928), *VSI-CirrusCloud* by N.E. Thing Co. [Ingrid Baxter and Iain Baxter&] (b.1936), and *All Star Cast (A Place)* by Les Levine (b.1935), all from 1967, used non-traditional materials such as plastic and electricity and were installed at ground level, encouraging the audience to walk through and under the pieces. They were taking a new approach to sculpture, creating interactive and immersive environments. Etrog, however, remained committed to his interpretation of the European avant-garde through the content and symbolism of his bronze sculptures that sat on pedestals, resulting in what was considered a normal viewing experience.

THE ORGANIC AND THE MECHANICAL

Etrog often depicted the human figure using elements that recall ordinary hardware-store supplies. He named his succeeding stylistic periods after these objects: Links, Hinges, Screws and Bolts. Although he incorporated a mechanical visual language to act as a key structural element and motif in his work, he nonetheless retained a focus on the human experience as if to suggest a blending of the two. The result is artworks seemingly both organic and mechanical, often considered contradictory elements that in Etrog's oeuvre become deeply intertwined.



Sorel Etrog in studio, early 1970s, photograph by Aurelio Amendola.

One way to understand Etrog's approach to visualizing this tension between organic and mechanical elements is through his interest in existentialist and absurdist philosophy, which developed as he searched for ways to create meaning out of an irrational world.⁸ Born in the decades following the Second World War, these philosophical inquiries were a response to atrocities such as the mass killings caused by the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the full discovery of the genocide committed by the Nazis in the concentration camps. European philosophers and writers—including Albert Camus (1913–1960) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980)—struggled to redefine what it meant to be human while artists—for example, Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966), Germaine Richier (1902–1959), and Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985)—portrayed the human body and psyche as wounded and battered.⁹ Exhibitions such as *New Images of Man*, which opened at the Museum of Modern Art in 1959, the same year Etrog moved to New York, also dealt with the consequences of the war and its impact on the idea of humanism, displaying artworks that represented the human body as broken and the human spirit as consumed by anxiety, horror, and dread.¹⁰

In the following decades, Etrog participated in this critical examination of the human condition by repeatedly depicting the human body as mechanized, allowing him to delve deeper into its operation and to dissect how physical movement occurs. As he explained to his friend the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980), Etrog thought that the body and the machine should be seen as one: "I found that most mechanical tools are an extension of our hand. For me, the mechanical world has a very strong connection with our

bodies."¹¹ During his Links period of the 1960s, Etrog painted images of men and women that appear to be stripped of their skin, exposing the mechanisms that enable the body's operations. The torso in *Ceremonial Figure*, 1968, for example, is replaced by a complex network of links, which resembles an X-Ray image of the figure's intestines. In Etrog's Hinges period, the hard edges of the fitting dictate the appearance of sculpted figures, making them look like organisms that are part flesh, part machine, such as in the sculpture *Pieton*, 1974. In the film *Spiral*, from 1974, the body and the machine merge memorably, even shockingly, in the image of a naked woman; her outspread legs face the camera, her vagina replaced by a ticking clock.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Ceremonial Figure*, 1968, oil on canvas, 127 x 101.6 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Untitled*, 1974–75, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.8 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

COLLABORATIONS

While best known as a sculptor, Etrog expressed his hunger for innovation through other creative work as well. From the late 1960s onward he forged friendships with prominent intellectual and artistic figures such as the playwrights Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) and Eugène Ionesco (1909–1994), Marshall McLuhan, and the American composer John Cage (1912–1992), with whom he collaborated on many projects. Etrog co-produced artist books, stage and set designs, and multimedia performances, diverse artistic experiments that exemplify the artist's inventiveness, curiosity, and creative versatility.

Etrog's earliest collaboration was with the French poet Claude Aveline (1901–1992). The artist first created sculptures inspired by Aveline's poem "Portrait de l'Oiseau-Qui-N'Existe-Pas" (Portrait of the bird that does not exist) for the Canadian pavilion at the 1966 Venice Biennale, after which he approached Aveline with an offer to illustrate the same poem in a book.¹² This idea materialized in a 1967 artist book titled *L'oiseau qui n'existe pas*, which reveals the ability of Etrog—himself a writer and poet—to translate words into a distinct visual world, giving the text a new meaning. Combining literature and visual art became a regular practice for Etrog, who designed and illustrated six artist books in collaboration with important writers, including the 1969 *Chocs* with Ionesco, developed from a poem by the playwright. For the publication Etrog produced a visual counterpoint to Ionesco's writing; the reading-viewing experience is enhanced by Etrog's use of different kinds of paper, including transparencies, in his design.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Bird that Does Not Exist II*, 1965, bronze, 22.9 x 45.7 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Bird that Does Not Exist*, 1967, engraving, 40.8 cm x 31.8 cm, from the artist's book *L'oiseau qui n'existe pas* (*The Bird that Does Not Exist*), with poem by Claude Aveline, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

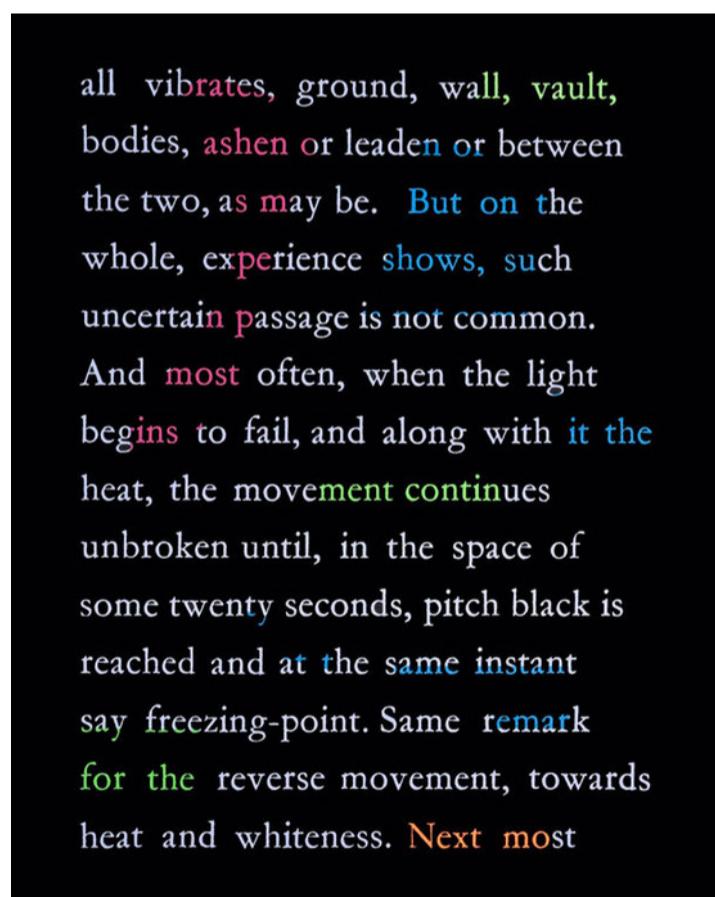


Sorel Etrog and John Cage, *Musicage*, installation view, for John Cage's seventieth birthday, 1982, photographed by Robin Knight.



Another example of Etrog's collaborative practice was a project initiated by Marshall McLuhan. After seeing Etrog's film *Spiral*, 1974, the media theorist proposed to the artist that they transform it into a book. In 1987 they published their work, also titled *Spiral*, which comprised a collage of words and images. Continuing this trend, in 1982 Etrog worked with the composer John Cage on the installation *Musicage* to celebrate Cage's seventieth birthday at the Toronto store Edwards Books & Art. Their joint publication, *Dream Chamber: Joyce and the Dada Circus, a Collage by Sorel Etrog. About Roaratorio: an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake by John Cage* was released for the occasion.

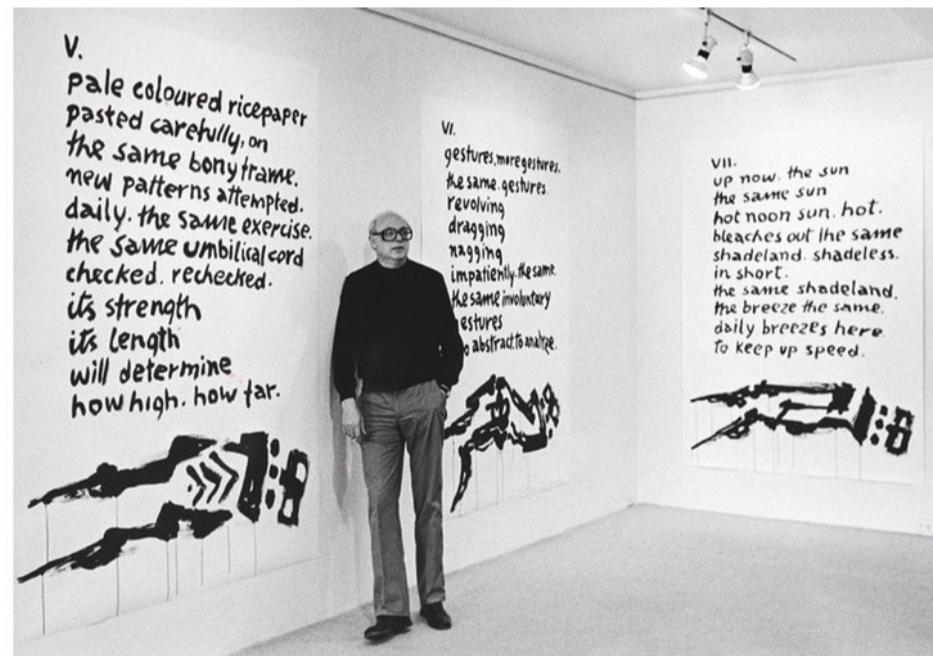
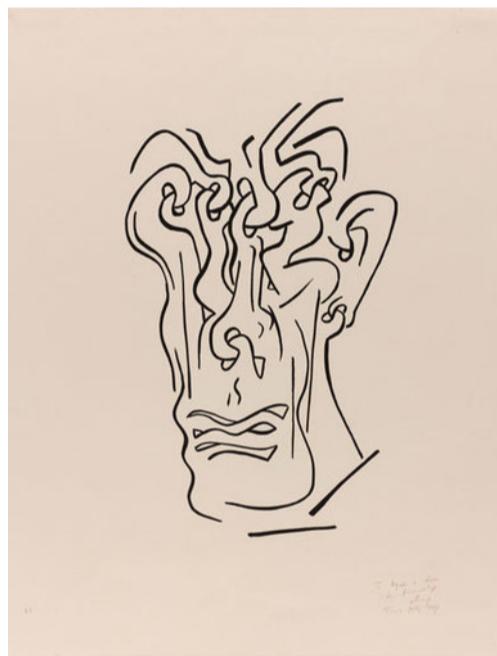
The most meaningful of these friendships-turned-collaborations was the one Etrog forged with Samuel Beckett, the author of the play *Waiting for Godot*, among many other works. When the two met in the U.K. in 1969, at a function for a project whose funds were donated by Etrog's Canadian patron, Samuel J. Zacks, Etrog was in his mid-thirties and Beckett in his early sixties; they quickly connected and stayed friends until Beckett's death in 1989. Etrog later recalled that during that first meeting he immediately began to sketch the writer's portrait: "Surprisingly I found myself making drawings of Beckett's head which has still haunted me ever since meeting him. I am not too much of a portraitist, and I would rather say that I tried to capture the inner tension of our meeting. (His? Mine? Or both? I don't know)."¹³



Pages from *Imagination Dead Imagine*, 1982, limited-edition artist book designed and illustrated by Sorel Etrog with text by Samuel Beckett, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

Etrog soon began working on illustrations for Beckett's short prose text "Imagination Dead Imagine" (1965). The project was not published until 1982, when the Scottish-Canadian writer and publisher John Calder (1927-2018) released a book in a limited edition. The art critic John Bentley Mays (1941-2016) praised Etrog for his ability to "read a modernist text of such intricacy and density as Beckett's, understand it and—instead of merely illustrating it—re-situate the words in an imaginative visual space which creates, in effect, a new book, with new and emerging meaning."¹⁴

Etrog's groundbreaking work *The Bodifestation of the Kite*, 1984, was made in celebration of Beckett's seventy-eighth birthday. In this performance piece, Etrog inscribed and illustrated his own poem "The Kite" "live" on the walls of Toronto's Grunwald Gallery, while Gloria Luoma of the National Ballet of Canada danced Etrog's choreography to electronic music that the artist had composed. Among the approximately 150 people who attended the single performance was Joyce Zemans, who wrote that it was a "moving artwork and a fitting tribute to Samuel Beckett."¹⁵



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Beckett*, 1969, lithograph on paper, sheet: 66 x 50.8 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *The Bodifestation of the Kite*, installation view at Grunwald Gallery, Toronto, 1984, dedicated to Samuel Beckett in honour of his seventy-eighth birthday, photographer unknown, Edward P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Although these collaborations are lesser-known elements of Etrog's five-decade career, their importance lies in how they reveal the extraordinary scope of the artist's talent, creativity, and originality. With them in mind, the large bronze sculptural work for which Etrog is internationally renowned can be understood in the larger context of his ongoing commitment to and hunger for experimentation and innovation.



LEGACY

Etrog's legacy goes beyond his incredible productivity and immense body of work and includes his role as a pioneer of public sculpture in Canada. While few contemporary sculptors follow Sorel Etrog's commitment to working in bronze—an exception is Montreal-born, New York City-based David Altmejd (b.1974)—his career can be seen as the beginning of a renaissance of sorts. Etrog's sculptures adorn public and civic spaces in Ottawa, Calgary, Montreal, and of course Toronto, which is home to about thirty. Dozens more can be seen at the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital in an installation that explores the importance of art to physical and mental health.

Within the institutional art world, Etrog's achievements are recognized at home in Canada and abroad. He lived in Toronto for fifty-four years while maintaining a dialogue with artists, critics, and writers from around the world, exhibiting in all the major art centres of North America and Europe as well as in India, Israel, and Singapore. Leading museums in Canada—the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery in New Brunswick, and Barrie, Ontario's MacLaren Art Centre—and around the world—the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, for example—have works by Etrog on permanent display.



LEFT: Installation view of the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, 2020, photograph by Toni Hafkenscheid. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Pieton*, 1974, bronze, 274.3 cm (h), Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto.

Despite his great successes, Etrog's most significant contribution may be as a model for younger genre-bending artists. He experimented in different media and art forms throughout his career, producing a body of visual and written work that is impressive in its diversity and complexity. Accordingly, he set a vital precedent for contemporary Canadian artists as a polymath who saw no reason to restrict his creativity to a single medium and as a trailblazer who stands as an important example of a Toronto-based yet internationally recognized contemporary artist.



Sorel Etrog, *Flight*, 1963–64, bronze, 457.2 cm (w), Bank of Canada, Ottawa.



STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Sorel Etrog was a prolific artist who worked in diverse media, his career comprising clear stylistic periods defined by a broad range of inspiration. Although best known as a sculptor, especially in bronze, Etrog was also a painter, an obsessive draftsman, a poet, a composer, a filmmaker, and a collaborator on multimedia works. Despite its variety, however, Etrog's oeuvre consistently revolves around tensions that inform human existence, such as the desire for connection, the joy of movement, the inevitability of separation and loss, and the persistence of organic life in a mechanized environment. Some pieces even include actual connecting devices—links, hinges, bolts, nails, and screws.

PAINTED CONSTRUCTIONS (1952–60)

Etrog developed his Painted Constructions as a student at Tel Aviv's Arts Institute for Painting and Sculpture from 1953 to 1955. At the time he found inspiration in the European avant-garde, a group of artistic movements from the early twentieth century that expanded the definition of art by breaking free of tradition. Influenced by Cubist collage, Constructivist relief sculptures, and artists such as Paul Klee (1897–1940), Joan Miró (1893–1983), and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), Etrog challenged the separation of painting and sculpture.

"I became dissatisfied working with the canvas and I started to construct my paintings directly on wood. This way I could extend even further the irregular frame and the raised contours outlining shape and colour," Etrog explained.¹ The constructions resemble conventional paintings insofar as they are painted in oil and are hung flat on the wall, but they are multilayered, forming compositions that playfully defy standard uses of the materials. Etrog builds up the surface by gluing or nailing together wood panels of different sizes and shapes. He then adds a layer of raised lines—some straight, some curved—and forms—triangles, circles, multisided shapes—in order to emphasize their irregularity. A final layer is applied by painting the surfaces in deep, saturated colours, often in shades of brown, yellow, red, purple, and orange, the juxtaposition of hues contributing to the overall complexity of the artwork.

Society of Triangles, 1954–55, typifies this style. The central form is an irregular rectangle flanked by two half squares with a triangle overlaid on top. The next layer is composed of circles, criss-crossed lines, and overlapping geometric figures. This asymmetrical organization is echoed by an inconsistent use of colour. Etrog explained that during this time he was inspired in style and subject matter by the modern atonal music of composers such as Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951), and Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), who deliberately avoided harmony and balance in their creations: "While I worked my ears were full of the rhythms of the modern music I was listening to, and it came as no surprise that this became the theme of a group of works—strings and bows intersecting each other, dividing the space, a different colour for each instrument."²

These works were the subject of Etrog's first solo show, held at the ZOA (Zionists of America) House in Tel Aviv in 1958, shortly before Etrog left Israel to study in the United States. The ingenuity of his works led one critic to write that Etrog, even at this early stage of his career, was one of Israel's most original young artists.³



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Society of Triangles*, 1954–55, oil painted wood relief, overall: 71.4 x 65.5 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Naum Gabo, *Circular Relief*, c.1925, plastic on wood, 49.8 x 49.8 x 22.9 cm, Tate Modern, London.



Sorel Etrog's first solo exhibition at ZOA House, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1958, photographer unknown. *From left to right: Tony, Sorel, Moshe, and Zipora.*

EARLY SCULPTURE (1959–63)

Etrog's shift from flat two-dimensional works to full three-dimensional sculpture was first reflected in his later painted constructions. One of these, *The Encounter*, 1959, resembles the sculpture *Barbarian Head* of the same year; the two are composed of similar crescent shapes and both use physical forms and empty space to create an interplay. *The Encounter*, still two-dimensional, can only hint at this kind of drama. In *Barbarian Head* the solid forms of the sculpture are accentuated as their opposite and negative space is explored, giving the sense that the sculpture is near its structural breaking point.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *The Encounter*, 1959, oil on wood relief, 85 x 67 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Barbarian Head*, 1959, bronze, 25 x 17 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

Etrog's transition was inspired by his first experiences of non-Western art, which occurred after his move to New York to study at the Brooklyn Museum School. "Every day at the school I would pass the museum's collection of African, pre-Columbian, and Pacific Island sculpture. I was struck by the directness of their shapes and started to make numerous sketches. After

working with flat shapes all these years I felt I was ready to work in three dimensions and this transition came naturally to me.⁴ At the museum he paid particular attention to small ritual objects from Papua New Guinea, known as *kena*, which had long handles ending in carvings, often of human figures.

As Etrog's interest shifted from geometric abstraction to organic forms, he began to create pieces inspired by natural patterns of growth. As in his first sculptures, he explored three-dimensionality and mass but now in elegant balance with clean, elongated lines and vertical compositions. The intention was to create sculptures that would appear to be weightless despite their imposing size and connection to a base. Etrog explored the standing human figure in *Africana*, 1960, as well as other living organisms. In *Blossom*, 1960–61, and *Waterbury*, 1961, two examples that appear to combine the human and the floral, the long stems culminate in circular forms, resulting in something reminiscent of a flower or a tree. Etrog explained that his new style resolved a question of "timing"; he wanted "the figure to soar from the base like the trunk of a tree... leaving the drama to the top."⁵



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Waterbury*, 1961, wood, 305 cm (h), McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog carving *Waterbury*, 1961, in his New York studio, 1961, photograph by Leslie Shergin.

THE LINKS PERIOD (1963–71)

In 1963, Etrog made his first trip to Italy, where he discovered the art of the Etruscans, the ancient civilization of Italy that preceded the Romans. This encounter led to the invention of his Links motif.⁶ It dominated Etrog's work for eight years, during which he used it to articulate the existential contrasts of human life. As he said, "I saw in [the link] a strong device for connecting and creating tension, mirroring the tension in our very existence with and within the outside world."⁷



Privately, Etrog gave a biographical explanation for his transition from biomorphic work to his interest in links. In 1966, while living and working in Florence, Etrog witnessed the flooding of the Arno River, which affected him deeply. In a letter to the AGO director, William Withrow (1926–2018), Etrog wrote: "I am witnessing how these past immediate experiences are getting in my new work. I feel certain hardness; the fluid line is being replaced by the links. It gives a more mechanical look. Yet I want to believe that I still speak about the human condition."⁸ He used the link not only to represent the mechanical but also to depict the organic body; through it Etrog examined how elements of the body connect and how they move, sometimes together and sometimes in opposition to one another.

Etrog was attracted to the device both formally and metaphorically for its ability to embody contradictions: the link brings elements together yet allows them also to come undone, and it represents a psychological state as well as physically articulating the mechanisms of the body. Etrog addressed its ability to bind opposites in a 1970 poem, "Links," which begins: "Art linked to life. / Art linked to death. Temporary witnesses, / linked to one another: linked to the past / linked to the unknown."⁹

During this time, Etrog created abstract sculptures whose different parts are balanced through a central link (*Flight*, 1963–64; *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967) and used the motif to explore dance and movement in the large-scale painting *The Rite of Spring*, 1967–68. It also provided him with an opportunity to create works that explore familial connections, as in *Large Family Group*, 1963–64, or to depict individual subjects, as in his portrait of Samuel Beckett from 1969, a print that incorporates a link motif.



Sorel Etrog, *Queeny*, 1967, polished bronze, 45.7 cm (h), Rumi Galleries, Oakville, Ontario.



Sorel Etrog, *The Rite of Spring*, 1967-68, oil on board, 121.9 x 426.7 cm, Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto.

The period ended with Etrog's brief Bulls phase, which lasted from 1969 to 1970, when he combined link and bull motifs to depict bulls in hundreds of sketches, studies, and fragments as well as in several sculptures.¹⁰ The works are dark in character and testify to the depression the artist was battling at the time, following not only the devastation of Florence but also his life-threatening car accident. In the process of preparing his most important work from this period, *Targets (Study after Guernica)*, 1969, a monumental recreation of the masterpiece by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Etrog immersed himself in *La Tauromaquia*, 1816, the thirty-three-print series of bullfighting scenes by Francisco Goya (1746-1828). Etrog drew many studies, depicting defenceless cows and bulls being tormented in a wide variety of painful positions. In *Study for Targets: Three Caresses*, 1969, the animals appeared to be hanged upside down and flayed open. The black lines that detail the painting are rendered in an obsessive and chaotic way, enhancing the feeling of horror.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Bull Sketch*, 1969, gelatin silver print, 10.9 x 14 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Francisco Goya, *La Tauromaquia*, Plate No. 19: "Otra locura suya en la misma plaza (Another Madness of His in the Same Ring)", 1816, etching, 24.5 x 35.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

SCREWS AND BOLTS (1971–73)

During the early 1970s, Etrog's work transitioned into an exploration of attachment, using mechanical elements in a new style he referred to as Screws and Bolts, which is typified by sexual, playful, and humorous works filled with life, energy, and colour. He described it as a clear break from what had preceded it: "I don't postpone an idea. A new one comes and eats up the old one." He explained that, in 1971, he became obsessed with the screw—another humble fastener—after finding one in the street:

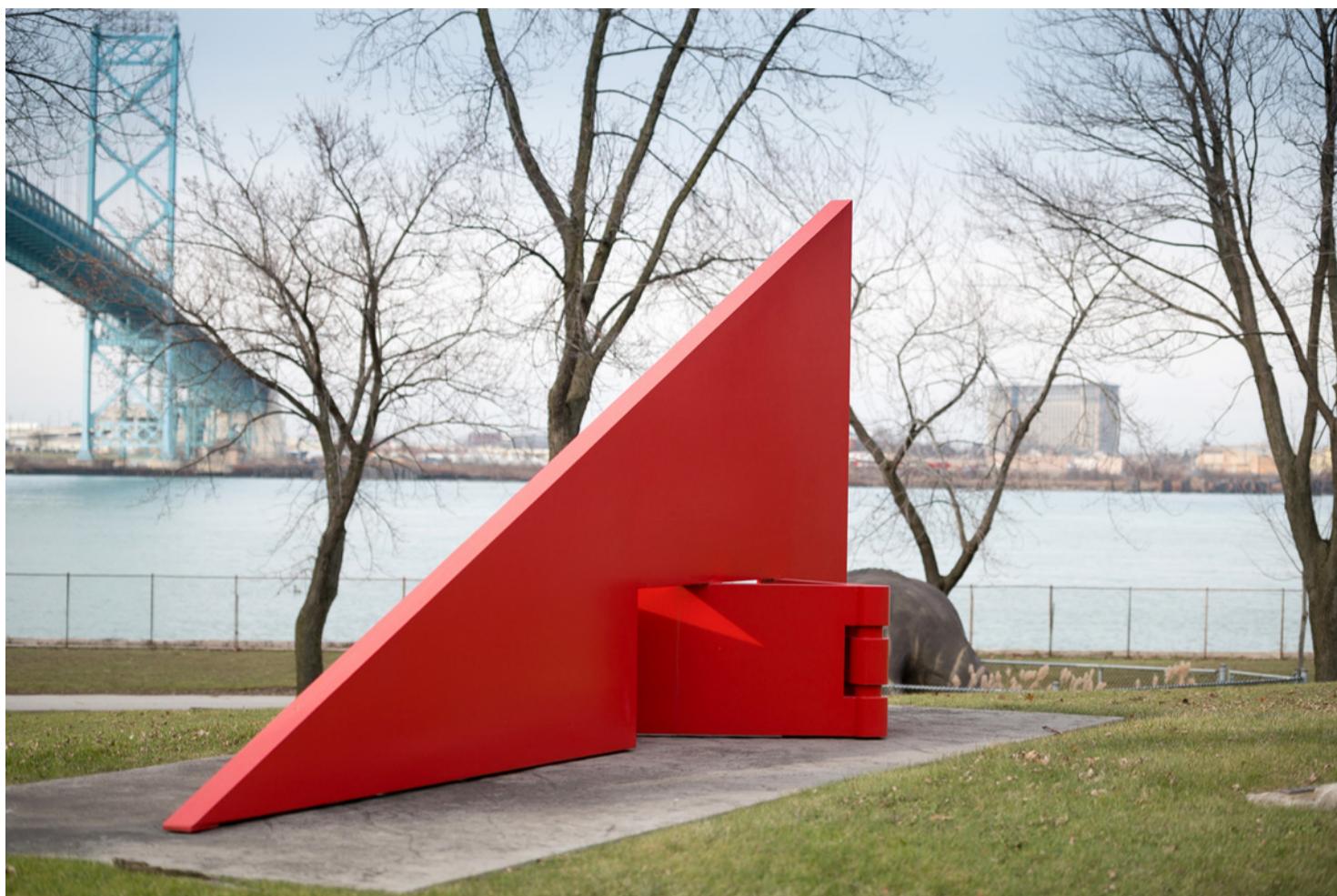
On my next trip to Italy I was going to cast a big trunk full of figurine wax models from my [Links] period. After landing in Rome I drove to my Florence studio. . . . It was late, cold, and I was tired. But the eyescrew. . . was still on my mind. Instead of going to the hotel, I changed quickly into work clothes, found some crackers, opened a bottle of whiskey and worked through the night, making my first plaster of an eyescrew That trunk of waxes was not opened and even today they remain un-cast. Before long the studio filled up with screws and bolts sculpture.¹¹



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Witness-7271*, 1971-72, enameled bronze, 94 cm (h), Miriam Shiell Fine Art, Toronto. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Condottiere*, 1972, painted bronze, edition of 3, 101.6 cm (h), The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

As Etrog turned his attention to these connecting devices, he was inspired to develop a visual language that expressed the fulfilment of sexual desire through the act of copulation, arising from the everyday association of the word "screw." At the beginning of this period, he created many studies of the perceived oppositions between men and women and explored male and female anatomies, connecting them in a variety of sexual poses. Later the artist used the motif to create numerous calligraphic drawings in which he developed what appears to be an alphabet for a language of his own invention.

The sculptures of this period are vastly different from Etrog's other work. He still made use of the traditional technique of bronze casting, but instead of allowing the dark shiny patina to remain on the final surface, he chose to apply vibrant enamel paint in bold primary colours, a rare choice in his sculptural career and one that he would repeat only for *Spaceplough II*, 1990-98 and in his final Composites series.



Sorel Etrog, *Spaceplough II*, 1990–98, painted steel, 518.5 x 242.8 cm, Windsor Sculpture Garden. This piece was originally displayed at Toronto Sculpture Garden (TSG), as a part of the TSGs inaugural season, 1981.

Although it is tempting to associate the bright, shiny colours and humour of the Screws and Bolts sculptures with the style of Pop art, prevalent in the 1960s, Etrog was referring to Surrealism, borrowing themes from this interwar avant-garde movement known for its exploration of sexual themes and erotic desire, taken up by artists such as Jean Arp (1886–1966), Salvador Dalí (1904–1989), Man Ray (1890–1976), and Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985).¹² With sculptures such as the explicit *Northeast*, 1971, *Kabuki*, 1971–72, and *Sadko*, 1971–72, Etrog defied the expectations of gallerists and collectors by creating works that he described as “fresh, funny and erotic.”¹³ Writers and critics expressed their surprise: one journalist noted that when exhibiting the works in Toronto, “[Etrog] has been on the receiving end of argument and rib-nudging” because of what was perceived as their “sexiness.” In their view the works were sensual and erotic but not “sexy.”¹⁴ The French art critic Pierre Restany (1930–2003) was more critical, calling the sculptures “second-hand metaphors,” claiming that they “could risk throwing the whole body of [Etrog’s] work out of balance without creating any real possibility for the play of irony or double meaning.”¹⁵

THE HINGES PERIOD (1972–79)

While on holiday in Israel, Etrog became enamoured with a new device for connection and articulation: “I picked up a child’s drawing pad and began to draw. . . The hinge started to obsess me. . . in no time [it] started to dominate

my sculpture, first in small wax maquettes and later in an explosion in plaster."¹⁶ When he turned those studies into their final forms, Etrog returned to the unpainted finish of his earlier sculpture, as he "was nostalgic for the subtle monochrome patina of the bronzes."¹⁷

The hinge appealed to Etrog for its ability to connect flat elements firmly while permitting motion. He noted that "the hinge connected the flat surfaces with its tubular swelling, creating a dialogue between the mechanical and the organic."¹⁸ With it, he returned to his comfort zone, exploring some of the key tensions that play out in human existence: the moment of potential between moving and standing still, between revealing and concealing.

For a short time, Etrog was practising two styles simultaneously—a rarity in the artist's career. In *Pistoya (Mother and Child)*, 1973–76, the artist

blends the motifs of Screws and Bolts and also Hinges: the figures' heads are made up of the former while the latter are used for the upper bodies. Soon, however, he plunged fully into the possibilities of the new, initiating a period primarily characterized by works that he labelled Extroverts and Introverts.

For the Extroverts, which include *Rushman*, 1974–76, as well as *Pistoya (Mother and Child)*, Etrog created a variety of walking human-figure sculptures that each express the differences in rhythm, speed, and character of this action. In contrast, Introverts are geometric abstractions, vaultlike objects with surfaces composed of hinged doors that are locked shut, never to be opened. *Shelter*, 1976, for example, is a symmetrical cube whose surfaces are connected by a network of hinges. The hinges do not open and the possibility of movement is never achieved. *Shelter* and similar Introvert sculptures speak of the existence of an inaccessible hidden inner core, a powerful metaphor for emotional life and for the inability of human beings to fully know the other, and indeed of the need to lock things away from the self.

While Etrog predominantly used the hinge motif in sculpture, he also created many Hinge paintings, which are characterized by meticulous composition and a high level of finish. In *Macrowaves*, 1974–75, for example, Etrog uses the new motif to depict a highly stylized seascape of waves that seem to be frozen mid-movement. He also used it in drawings, including *Marshall McLuhan*, 1976.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, *Pistoya (Mother and Child)*, 1973–76, bronze, 151.4 cm (h), The Estate of Sorel Etrog. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Shelter*, 1976, patinated bronze, edition of 5, 69 x 44 x 44 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.



Sorel Etrog, *Macrowaves*, 1974–75, oil on canvas, 35.6 x 45.7 cm, The Estate of Sorel Etrog.

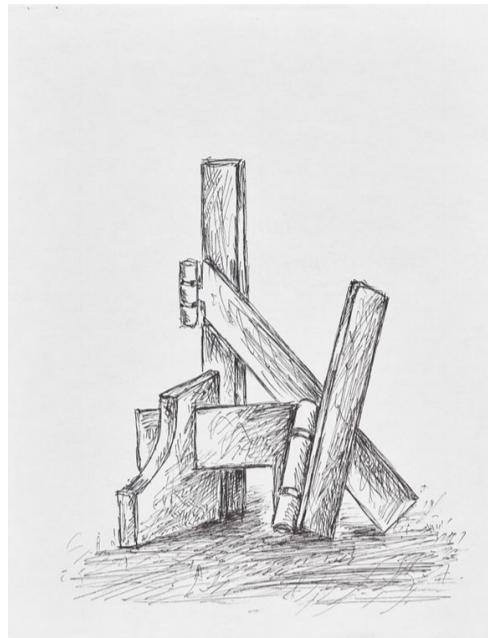
SOREL ETROG'S SCULPTURAL TECHNIQUE

Bronze was Etrog's material of choice, and his sculptures were cast using the ancient lost-wax process, imbuing them with a monumental quality. Yet the foundation of his sculptural practice was drawing and sketching. He drew constantly on whatever material he could find—used envelopes, cigarette packs, and napkins, as well as professional drawing paper. These sketches range from a preliminary doodle to an elaborate and fully conceived drawing. They are executed in a variety of media, including ink, gouache, oil, watercolour, acrylic, pastel, charcoal, ballpoint pen, and pencil.

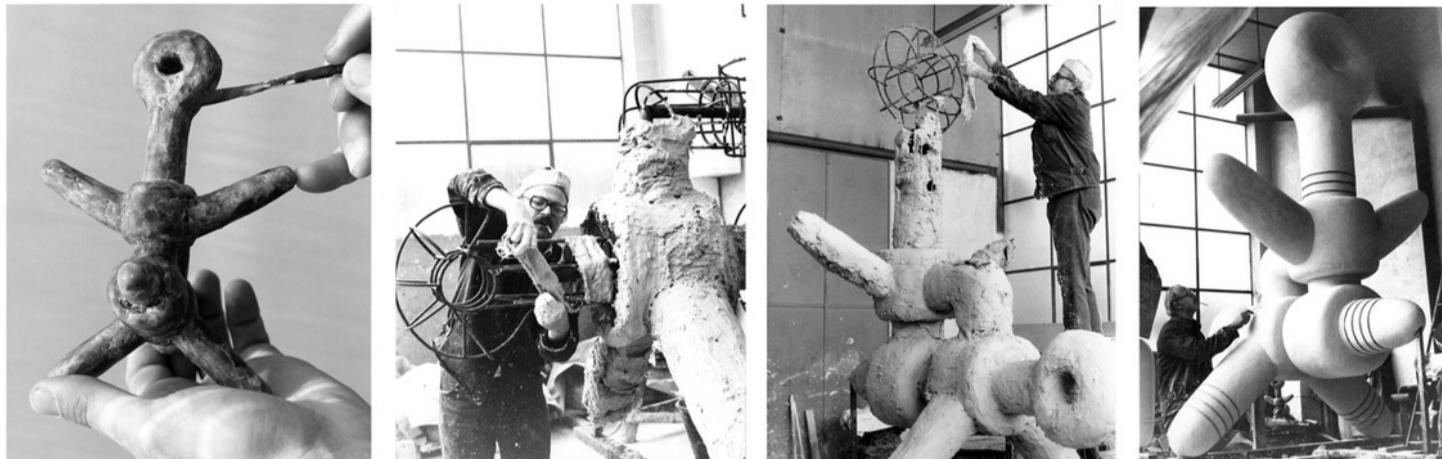
In the next stage Etrog created three-dimensional maquettes—small-scale models—using malleable wax to generate versions of his idea, generally about thirty or forty centimetres high. The most successful of these were then cast in bronze, resulting in many sculptures of varying sizes. Even though they served as studies and preparatory work for large-scale sculptures, Etrog considered them distinctive in their own right, and he often exhibited and sold them.

Etrog would then enlarge the works two further sizes—medium (between one and a half and two metres) and large (taller than two metres). These were considered the full expression of his idea. He would remake each sculpture in plaster by hand to the desired size. During this stage, Etrog would frequently add details or texture the surface of the sculpture; this revising can be seen in the difference between the smooth, rounded exterior of the maquette for *Survivors Are Not Heroes*, 1967, and the grooves found in the finished piece.

Once the study process was complete, a full-size plaster version and mould was created, which reproduced both the exact form and specific details of the original but as a *negative*, or hollow, image. Next, the mould was filled with hot wax that, when hardened, created a replica of the sculpture. Vertical wax channels called sprues were inserted into the wax replica, which was then placed in a second mould made of fire-resistant ceramic. The mould was next fired in a kiln. The heat melted the wax, which ran out of the mould so molten bronze could be poured in to replace it and cast the final version. Once the sculpture was released from the mould, Etrog treated the bronze using a process known as patination, which protects the sculpture from corrosion or weathering as well as adding shimmer and shine.



LEFT: Sorel Etrog, sketch for *Powersoul*, c. 1988, pen and ink on paper, 21.6 cm x 27.9 cm, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. RIGHT: Sorel Etrog, *Sun Life Study*, 1984, bronze, 38.1 cm (h), The Estate of Sorel Etrog.



Stages of production for *Sadko*, 1971-72, from preliminary wax model through construction in plaster to final plaster version before casting, c.1972, photograph by Aurelio Amendola.

This process can be repeated multiple times to create several editions of one sculpture, a common practice in bronze casting. Etrog's smaller works were usually made into limited editions of between seven and nine sculptures; medium-size sculptures were typically cast in editions of five or seven, and the largest ones into either a single work or editions of three and five.

Etrog's commitment to bronze and to the lost-wax process separates him from his peers. During the second half of the twentieth century few artists used this method, and even fewer mastered it. He was exceptional in this sense; having learned every aspect of the casting process in 1960 when he cast his first sculptures at the Modern Art Foundry, Astoria, New York, he performed most of the casting himself, without the help of assistants. The practical knowledge gave him the freedom to stylistically innovate and to push the boundaries of his craft in ways not previously seen.



WHERE TO SEE

The works of Sorel Etrog are held in public and private collections, in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book.



ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

317 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1-877-225-4246
ago.ca



Sorel Etrog, Society of Triangles, 1954-55
Oil painted wood relief
Overall: 71.4 x 65.5 cm



Sorel Etrog, White Scaffolding, 1958
Oil on wood
Overall: 77.5 x 40.6 cm



Sorel Etrog, The Golem, 1959
Wood
Overall: 40.6 x 33.0 x 15.2 cm



Sorel Etrog, Ritual Dancer, 1960-62
Bronze
147.3 cm (h)



Sorel Etrog, Sunbird II, 1962-64
Bronze
199.5 x 89.9 x 68.3 cm



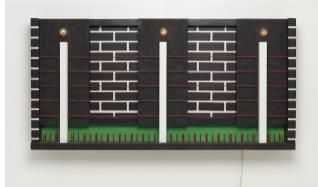
Sorel Etrog, Beckett, 1969
Lithograph on paper
Sheet: 66 x 50.8 cm



Sorel Etrog, Marshall McLuhan, 1976
Charcoal, pastel, and ink on paper
Sheet: 49.1 x 33.4 cm



Sorel Etrog, Composite 11, 1996-97
Wood, acrylic paint, plastic, and metal
Overall: 58.7 x 111.7 x 18.2 cm



**Sorel Etrog, Composite 14,
1996-97**

Wood and plywood, particle board, metal rod and screws, incandescent lamps and electrical fixtures, and acrylic paint
150 x 12 x 189.2 cm



**Sorel Etrog, Composite 18,
1996-97**

Wood, acrylic paint plywood, hardboard, foam packing material, metal hinges, and valve handles
Door closed: 124.7 x 8 cm

ART MUSEUM UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Hart House
7 Hart House Circle
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
416-978-8398
harthouse.ca



**Sorel Etrog, Complexes of a
Young Lady, 1962**

Bronze, edition of 2
270 x 75 x 52 cm



**Sorel Etrog, Survivors Are Not
Heroes, 1967**

Bronze, edition of 3
548.6 cm (h)

BANK OF CANADA

234 Wellington Street West
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



Sorel Etrog, Flight, 1963-64

Bronze
457.2 cm (w)



BOW VALLEY SQUARE

205 5th Avenue South West
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
403-261-0621



Sorel Etrog, Kabuki, 1971-72
Painted bronze
365 cm (h)



Sorel Etrog, Sadko, 1971-72
Painted bronze
365.8 cm (h)

FRANKLIN D. MURPHY SCULPTURAL GARDEN

University of California, Los Angeles
245 Charles E Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.
310-443-7000
ucla.edu



Sorel Etrog, War Remembrance II, 1960-61
Bronze, edition of 5
43.2 x 104.1 x 57.2 cm



HENNICK FAMILY WELLNESS GALLERY

Mount Sinai Hospital
6000 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Sorel Etrog, *The Rite of Spring*, 1967-68
Oil on board
121.9 x 426.7 cm



Sorel Etrog, *Pieton*, 1974
Bronze
274.3 (h)



Sorel Etrog, *Dream Chamber*, 1976
Bronze, edition of 3
157.5 cm (h)

MACLAREN ART CENTRE

37 Mulcaster Street
Barrie, Ontario, Canada
705-721-9696
maclarenart.com/



Sorel Etrog, *Dream Chamber*, 1976
Bronze, edition of 3
157.5 cm (h)



MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

10365 Islington Avenue
Kleinburg, Ontario, Canada
905-893-1121
mcmichael.com



Sorel Etrog, Waterbury, 1961
Wood
305 cm (h)



Sorel Etrog, Shelter, 1976
Patinated bronze, edition of 5
69 x 44 x 44 cm

MONTRÉAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1380 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
514-285-2000
mbam.qc.ca



Sorel Etrog, War Remembrance II, 1960-61
Bronze, edition of 5
88.9 x 49.5 x 102.9 cm



OLYMPIC PARK, SOUTH KOREA

424 Olympic-ro, Oryun-dong
Songpa-gu, Seoul, South Korea
+82 2-410-1114



Sorel Etrog, Powersoul, 1988
Steel
10.1 m (h)

SUN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF CANADA

150 King Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Sorel Etrog, Sun Life, 1984
Bronze sheet and steel
848.6 cm (h)



TEL AVIV MUSEUM OF ART

The Golda Meir Cultural and Art Center
27 Shaul Hamelech Boulevard
Tel Aviv, Israel
+972 (0) 3-607-7020
tamuseum.org.il



**Sorel Etrog, *Musical Impression*,
1956**

Painted wood relief
73 x 44 cm

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE

Centre for the Arts
W660-4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
403-329-2111
uleth.ca/fine-arts



Sorel Etrog, *Moses*, 1963-65

Bronze, edition of 3
548.6 cm (h)



WINDSOR SCULPTURE GARDEN

Ambassador and Centennial Parks;
Between the Ambassador Bridge (Huron Church Road) and The Art Gallery of
Windsor (Church Street)
Windsor, Ontario
519-253-1812



**Sorel Etrog, *Spaceplough II*,
1990-98**
Painted steel
518.5 x 242.8 cm



**Sorel Etrog, *King and Queen*,
1990**
Painted steel, edition of 2
304.8 cm (h)

NOTES

BIOGRAPHY

1. The Eseriks changed their surname to Etrog when they arrived in Israel in 1950, although Sorel officially changed his last name only in 1961. Moriț became Moshe, and Falizia, Sorel's sister, became Zipora at the time of their immigration; Zipora took the name Gandler on her marriage.
2. Michelle Becker, *Sorel Etrog Painted Constructions 1952-1960* (Vancouver and Palm Desert, CA: Buschlen Mowat Galleries, 2006), 34.
3. For more on the Iași pogrom, see Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center website : www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/iasi-pogrom.html#footnoteref1_csopk0o.
4. Sorel Etrog, "Painted Constructions: 1952-60," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 49.
5. Robert J. Belton, "The Art of Sorel Etrog and His Romanian Background," *Finnish Journal for Romanian Studies*, no. 1 (2015): 13.
6. Author interview with Zipora Gandler, July 12, 2018; Theodore A. Heinrich, *The Painted Constructions 1952-1960 of Sorel Etrog* (Berne, Germany: Staempfli, & Cie, 1968), 10; Sorel Etrog in an interview with Joyce Zemans, July 13, 2000, in Joyce Zemans's Etrog-related papers.
7. Author interview with Zipora Gandler, July 12, 2018.
8. The Arts Institute for Painting and Sculpture is known today in English as the Avni Institute of Art and Design, which follows more closely its Hebrew name, Machon Avni, named after its founding director, Aharon Avni.
9. At its establishment in 1951 the Haifa museum was called the Museum of Modern Art, but today it is simply the Museum of Art. *Composition (Collage)* is mentioned in the ZOA catalogue under "watercolours and gouaches"—with no note regarding the year it was made—as found in Haifa's Museum of Modern Art collection. See *Etrog* (Tel Aviv: The ZOA House, 1958).
10. Correspondence between Etrog and Ralph Segalman, December 1957–February 1958, box 1, folder 2, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
11. "With Pen and Brush," *Yediot Ahronoth* (Tel Aviv), January 1958.
12. Theodore A. Heinrich, *The Painted Constructions 1952-1960 of Sorel Etrog* (Berne, Germany: Staempfli & Cie, 1968), 11.
13. According to his Brooklyn Museum Art School Record, Etrog took 240 hours of classes in painting with the Jewish-Ukrainian artist Yonia Fain (1913-2013) and sculpture with the American Edmond Casarella (1920-1996) during his first semester.



14. Theodore A. Heinrich, *The Painted Constructions 1952–1960 of Sorel Etrog* (Berne, Germany: Staempfli & Cie, 1968), 11.

15. Author interview with Sherry Stein and Karen McGuffin (Sorel Etrog's aunt's granddaughters), August 8, 2018.

16. The Zacks art collection was unique in Canada for both its size and its quality. It included works by leading European avant-garde artists as well as African and Oceanic artifacts. McKenzie Porter, "The Four Fabulous Lives of Sam Zacks," *Maclean's*, April 23, 1960: 16–19 and 68–74.

17. The two he began while at BMAS were *Capriccio*, 1961–64, and *Spiritual*, 1959.

18. The journalist McKenzie Porter wrote: "Among their modern European works the Zacks place figures and pictures by ancient Africans, Polynesians and Asians and by American Indian and Eskimo [sic] sculptors and painters to illustrate their theory that nineteenth- and twentieth-century schools of art owe much to the influence of primitive [sic] genius." McKenzie Porter, "The Four Fabulous Lives of Sam Zacks," *Maclean's*, April 23, 1960, 18.

19. See details in Moos's obituary: James Adams, "Art Dealer Walter Moos, 'The Father of Yorkville,'" *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), July 5, 2013.

20. Etrog to Moos, September 9, 1959, box 3, folder 13, Gallery Moos Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

21. H. Baer, "Torontoer Kunstkalender," *Toronto-Courier*, October 1959.

22. Sorel Eserick (Etrog)'s student records, Brooklyn Museum School Records.

23. The description of works is by James Goldworthy in *Etrog* (Toronto: Gallery Moos, 1961) (exhibition publication).

24. For information regarding Hirshhorn's purchases, see John Marshall, "Hirshhorn Adds Way-Out Sculpture to His Collection," *Telegram* (Toronto), March 11, 1961; "Buys 8 Etrog Sculptures," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), March 11, 1961; "Hirshhorn Buys Etrog," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 11, 1961.

25. Sam Zacks, in a letter to the art historian Ted Heinrich, expressed pride in his young protégé: "[H]e is hailed as a monumental arrival and great talent." Zacks to Theodore Allen Heinrich, June 11, 1963, box 11, folder 22, Zacks Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



26. For Zacks's work behind the scenes, see June 8 and August 25, 1961, letters from Thomas M. Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, New York, to Sam Zacks, box 4, folder 2, Zacks Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, as well as a letter from James Thrall Soby, trustee, Museum of Modern Art, New York, to Zacks, October 23, 1963, box 15, folder 8, Zacks Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

27. Barrie Hale, "Etrog International," *Telegram* (Toronto), December 19, 1964.

28. Etrog was officially invited to exhibit in Venice in November 1965, after the National Gallery of Canada's research curator, Willem Blom, met with the artist in Detroit during Etrog's exhibition at the J.L. Hudson Gallery, Detroit. Blom to Etrog, November 30, 1965, box 1, folder 15, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. The curator Ihor Holubizky described this grouping of Colville, Etrog, and Gaucher as "unlikely," commenting on the stylistic differences among the three artists. Ihor Holubizky, "Striking Sculptures Crowned Diverse Work," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), March 16, 2014.

29. For the decision to focus on sculpture and omit graphic work, see Willem Blom to Etrog, December 6, 1965, box 1, folder 15, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

30. Both sculptures were cast in Italy and were shipped to Montreal in the fall of 1966, after the Venice Biennale ended. Etrog to Sam Zacks, December 6, 1966, box 6, folder 36, Zacks Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

31. *Sculpture '67*, presented by the National Gallery of Canada as part of its Centennial program at the City Hall of Toronto, summer 1967, was a groundbreaking outdoor sculpture exhibition in its display of works by emerging artists who practised new sculptural techniques and used new materials. It was organized by the gallerist Dorothy Cameron.

32. Sorel Etrog, introduction, in *Sorel Etrog: Italian Portraits; Sculpture, Drawings, Etchings and Documents from the Italian Period, 1964-1985* (Toronto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1999), 5-7.

33. Sorel Etrog, introduction, in *Sorel Etrog: Italian Portraits, Sculpture, Drawings, Etchings and Documents from the Italian Period, 1964-1985* (Toronto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1999), 5-7.

34. William C. Forsey to Sam and Ayala Zacks, January 21, 1970, box 6, folder 34, Zacks Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

35. See, for example, Sorel Etrog, "Hinges: A Play in Three Acts," in John Calder, ed., *New Writing and Writers 20* (London: John Calder Publishers; New York: Riverrun Press, 1983).

36. *Kabuki* and *Sadko*, both from 1971–72, were installed in Calgary's Bow Valley Square in 1975. *Rushman*, 1974–76, *Ritual Head*, 1976, and *The Source*, 1964, were installed there in 1980 (*The Source* was on loan from Gallery Moos to the city of Calgary).

37. Sorel Etrog in an interview with Joyce Zemans, July 13, 2000, in Zemans's Etrog-related papers.

38. Author phone call with Joyce Zemans, October 30, 2018.

39. Joyce Zemans's Etrog-related papers.

40. Jay and Barbara Hennick, "The Story of the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery & Sorel Etrog Collection," *The Sorel Etrog Collection at the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery* (Toronto: Sinai Health System Foundation, 2016), 6.

41. Etrog donated eighty-seven works for this project, the largest donation he ever made to a single institution.

KEY WORKS: WHITE SCAFFOLDING

1. Sorel Etrog, "Painted Constructions: 1952–60," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 49.

2. Theodore Allen Heinrich, *The Painted Constructions 1952–1960 of Sorel Etrog* (Berne, Germany: Staempfli & Cie, 1968), 42.

3. Etrog highlighted Klee's influence in "Painted Constructions: 1952–1960," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 49. The other artists were named by Etrog in the late 1960s in his CV with biographical notes. Sorel Etrog Biographical Notes, box 7, folder 13, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

KEY WORKS: WAR REMEMBRANCE II

1. Etrog created the small maquette *War Remembrance Study* in c.1959. This study was never realized as a full sculpture. Later on, Etrog created another study, *War Remembrance II Study*, c.1959–1961. This one was made into a full-sized sculpture—*War Remembrance*, 1960–61—of which Etrog created five editions. The title is often recorded as *War Remembrance II*, so as to distinguish it from the earlier study. Not all editions were cast at the same time, and so some may carry a discrepancy in date.

2. William J. Withrow, *Etrog: Sculpture* (Toronto: Wilfeld Publishing, 1967), 45.

3. Sorel Etrog, "Sculptures: 1959–63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 61.

KEY WORKS: COMPLEXES OF A YOUNG LADY

1. For the Zacks Collection, see McKenzie Porter, "The Four Fabulous Lives of Sam Zacks," *Maclean's*, April 23, 1960, 16–19 and 68–74. The first to point out the Kena as a source for Etrog is William J. Withrow, "Sorel Etrog: Sculpting Is an Exploration," *Canadian Art* 22 (May/June 1965): 21.

2. Sorel Etrog, "Sculptures: 1959–63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 61.

3. Sorel Etrog, "Sculptures: 1959–63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 61.

KEY WORKS: MOSES

1. For Etrog's love affair with Italy, see *Sorel Etrog: Italian Portraits, Sculpture, Drawings, Etchings, and Documents from the Italian Period, 1964–1985* (Toronto: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1999).

2. Etrog to Willem Blom, research curator of the National Gallery of Canada, April 21, 1966, and Etrog to Robert H. Hubbard, NGC curator, October 6, 1966, box 1, folder 15, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

KEY WORKS: SURVIVORS ARE NOT HEROES

1. Susan Elizabeth Hart quoted in Maria Tippett, *Sculpture in Canada* (Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 2017), 84.

2. Maria Tippett, *Sculpture in Canada* (Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 2017), 102.

3. Sorel Etrog, "Sculptures: 1959–63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 61.

4. *Survivors Are Not Heroes* was purchased by the University of Toronto in 1968 for \$20,000. See letter from E.A. Wilkison, warden of Hart House, to Etrog dated November 1, 1968, box 8, folder 19, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Today the sculpture sits next to Hart House's Soldiers' Tower, which itself commemorates members of the university's population who gave their lives on active service.

KEY WORKS: TARGETS (STUDY AFTER GUERNICA)

1. Sorel Etrog, "Links: 1963–71," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 77.

2. Joyce Zemans, "The Links: Meditations on the Human Condition," in *Sorel Etrog Painting and Drawings: 1963–71* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University Gallery and Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, 2008), 6.

KEY WORKS: SADKO

1. I thank Ihor Holubizky and Gerard Jennings for their insight into Etrog's *Screws and Bolts* and for placing it within the context of Surrealism.

2. Kay Kritzwiser, "Sex Is Subtle in Etrog Sculpture," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 2, 1972.

3. For information regarding the 1975 Bow Valley Square installation, see <https://albertaonrecord.ca/is-glen-1139>.

**KEY WORKS: SPIRAL**

1. David Moos, "Sorel Etrog and Marshall McLuhan," in David Moos, *Sorel Etrog: Human Traces* (Oakville, ON; Buffalo, NY: Mosaic Press, n.d.), 58-59 (unpublished). For play information, see Sorel Etrog, "Hinges: A Play in Three Acts," in John Calder, ed., *New Writing and Writers 20* (London: John Calder Publishers; New York: Riverrun Press, 1983).
2. Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 12.
3. "A Dialogue between Sorel Etrog and Marshall McLuhan Regarding *Spiral*," in David Moos, *Sorel Etrog: Human Traces* (Oakville, ON; Buffalo, NY: Mosaic Press, n.d.), 66 (unpublished).
4. Etrog's quotation appears in Sorel Etrog, *Images from the Film Spiral*, with text by Marshall McLuhan (Toronto: Exile Editions: 1987), 123.
5. Sorel Etrog, *Images from the Film Spiral*, with text by Marshall McLuhan (Toronto: Exile Editions, 1987).

KEY WORKS: RUSHMAN

1. Sorel Etrog "Hinges: 1972-79," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 117.

KEY WORKS: DREAM CHAMBER

1. Sorel Etrog "Hinges: 1972-79," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 117.

KEY WORKS: SUN LIFE

1. Transcript of promotional video announcing the dedication of *Sun Life*, 1984, box 12, folder 9, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
2. Etrog speech draft, October 30, 1984, Program for the Dedication of *Sun Life*, November 6, 1984, box 12, folder 7, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

KEY WORKS: THE BODIFESTATION OF THE KITE

1. Christopher Hume, "Sorel Etrog's Courage Reassuring," *Toronto Star*, April 27, 1984.
2. The reports concerning the number of attendees vary from 150 to 200. The art critic John Bentley Mays wrote that it was a "full house" and provided the number 150 people. John Bentley Mays, "Etrog Brings Poem to Life: An Apt Tribute to Beckett," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), April 14, 1984, 9. Joyce Zemans noted that two hundred were present. Joyce Zemans, "On the Bodifestation of Etrog's 'The Kite,'" *Art Post* 2, no. 1 (June/July, 1984): 18.
3. Christopher Hume, "Sorel Etrog's Courage Reassuring," *Toronto Star*, April 27, 1984.



4. Some four hundred drawings related to this specific event are found among his papers. Box 23, folders 1-17, and box 24, folders 1-3, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

5. Robert O'Driscoll, "On the Bodifestation of Etrog's Kite," in *The Kite / Le Cerf-Volant* (London: John Calder; New York: Riverrun Press; Toronto: Canadian International Library, 1984), n.p.

6. Joyce Zemans, "On the Bodifestation of Etrog's 'The Kite,'" *Art Post* 2, no. 1 (June/July, 1984): 18-9.

7. The exhibition at Gallery Moos ran from April 28 to May 16, 1984. *The Kite / Le Cerf-Volant* (London: John Calder; New York: Riverrun Press; Toronto: Canadian International Library, 1984).

KEY WORKS: COMPOSITE 14

1. Sorel Etrog "Composites: 1996-2000" in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 149.

2. Author interview with Howard Apter, November 13, 2018.

3. Gary Michael Dault, "Sorel Etrog: Composites," in *Sorel Etrog, Composites June 3rd-July 1st, 2000* (Toronto: Christopher Cutts Gallery, 2000), n.p.

4. Joyce Zemans, "Sorel Etrog: Past Tense," *Canadian Art* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 82-83.

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Etrog created the small maquette *War Remembrance Study* around 1959. This study was never realized as a full sculpture. Later on, Etrog created another study, *War Remembrance II Study*, c.1959-1961. This one was made into a full sized sculpture—*War Remembrance*, 1960-61—of which Etrog created five editions. The title is often recorded as *War Remembrance II*, so as to distinguish it from the earlier study. Not all editions were cast at the same time, and so some may carry a discrepancy in date.

2. Etrog to William Withrow, April 21, 1966, box 13, folder 10, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

3. Joyce Zemans, "The Links: Meditations on the Human Condition," *Sorel Etrog Painting and Drawings: 1963-71* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University Gallery and Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, 2008), 6.

4. Joyce Zemans, "Sorel Etrog: Past Tense," *Canadian Art* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 82-83.



5. Alan Jarvis, "Sculpture in Canada: An Editorial," *Canadian Art* 19, no. 4 (Issue 80) (July/August 1962): 268; Hugo McPherson, "The Scope of Sculpture in '64," *Canadian Art* 21, no. 4 (Issue 92) (July/August 1964): 224–35. Etrog was not included in Jarvis's editorial, despite having Canadian residency status and being an internationally established sculptor, perhaps because he was still living in New York at the time.

6. A revised version of the text appears in William J. Withrow, *Sorel Etrog: Sculpture* (Toronto: Wilfeld Publishing, 1967), 10. For the full quotation, see essay draft, box 13, folder 10, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

7. Robert Murray's artist statement, September 1967, is reproduced at http://ccca.concordia.ca/history/dorothy_cameron/english/murray.html?languagePref=en& (accessed November 28, 2018).

8. For Etrog in light of these philosophies, see Ihor Holubizky, "Five Decades," in Ihor Holubizky, ed., *Sorel Etrog: Five Decades* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2013), 15.

9. Sarah Wilson, "New Images of Man: Postwar Humanism and Its Challenge in the West," in Okwui Enwesor, Katy Siegel, and Ulrich Wilmes, eds., *Postwar: Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* (Munich: Haus der Kunst, Prestel, 2017), 344–49.

10. The show brought together American and European artists, including Karel Appel, Francis Bacon, Jean Dubuffet, Alberto Giacometti, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock. Peter Selz, *New Images of Man* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959).

11. Sorel Etrog in conversation with Marshall McLuhan, quoted in Dalia Judovitz, introduction, in David Moos, *Sorel Etrog: Human Traces* (Oakville, ON; Buffalo, NY: Mosaic Press, n.d.), 13 (unpublished).

12. Two sculptures from this series, *The Bird That Does Not Exist II* and *The Bird That Does Not Exist IV*, both 1965, were included in Venice. For information regarding how the artist book came to be, see Claude Aveline to Etrog, March 27, 1969, box 5, folder 3, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

13. Sorel Etrog to Dr. Francis Warner of St. Peter's College, Oxford University, June 9, 1969, box 13, folder 10, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

14. John Bentley Mays, "Etrog, Beckett: From Friendship to Collaboration," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), April 24, 1982.

15. Joyce Zemans, "On the Bodifestation of Etrog's 'The Kite,'" *Art Post* 2, no. 1 (June/July 1984): 18–19.

**STYLE & TECHNIQUE**

1. Sorel Etrog, "Painted Constructions: 1952-60," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 49.
2. Theodore A. Heinrich, *The Painted Constructions 1952-1960 of Sorel Etrog* (Berne, Germany: Staempfli & Cie, 1968), 10; Sorel Etrog, "Painted Constructions: 1952-1960," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 49.
3. "With Pen and Brush," *Yediot Ahronoth* (Tel Aviv), January 1958, n.p.
4. Sorel Etrog, "Sculpture: 1959-63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 60.
5. Sorel Etrog, "Sculpture: 1959-63," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 60.
6. Etrog never pinpointed which Etruscan sculpture inspired him, and despite repeated efforts and much research, I was unable to discover an example of such work.
7. Sorel Etrog, "Links: 1963-71," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 77.
8. Sorel Etrog to William Withrow, April 21, 1966, box 13, folder 10, Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.
9. Sorel Etrog, "Links," *Art International* 12, no. 9 (1968). Reproduced also in Joyce Zemans, "The Links: Meditations on the Human Conditions," in *Sorel Etrog Paintings and Drawings: 1963-71* (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University Gallery and Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, 2008), 8.
10. Etrog gave the year 1971 as the end of his Links period, even though I wasn't able to find works in the style, nor any Bulls pieces dating from 1971. See Sorel Etrog, "Links: 1963-71," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 77.
11. Sorel Etrog, "Links: 1963-71," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 101.
12. I thank Ihor Holubizky and Gerard Jennings for their insight into Etrog's Screws and Bolts and for placing it in the context of Surrealism and against Pop art.
13. Etrog goes on to describe how he contacted his New York gallerist, George Staempfli, announcing that his upcoming exhibition would not be what he expected. Sorel Etrog, "Links: 1963-71," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 101.



14. Kay Kritzwiser, "Sex Is Subtle in Etrog Sculpture," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 2, 1972. Etrog himself addressed this issue, recalling his New York dealer's surprise on learning about these new works: Sorel Etrog, "Screws and Bolts: 1971–73" in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 101.
15. Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 33.
16. Sorel Etrog, "Hinges: 1972–79," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 117.
17. Sorel Etrog, "Hinges: 1972–79," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 117.
18. Sorel Etrog, "Steel Construction: 1980s," in Pierre Restany, *Sorel Etrog* (Munich, London, New York: Prestel, 2001), 133.



GLOSSARY

abstract art

Also called nonfigurative or nonrepresentational art, abstract art uses form, colour, line, and gestural marks in compositions that do not attempt to represent images of real things. It may interpret reality in an altered form, or depart from it entirely.

Abstract Expressionism

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, Abstract Expressionism is defined by its combination of formal abstraction and self-conscious expression. The term describes a wide variety of work; among the most famous Abstract Expressionists are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning.

Absurdism

Closely associated with the French writer and philosopher Albert Camus, absurdism, like existentialism, acknowledges an essentially meaningless universe in which humans struggle to create meaning. Unlike existentialism, absurdism does not depend on the acceptance of meaninglessness; instead, it offers that individuals might rebel against it by embracing the paradox of looking for answers to unanswerable questions, turning the search for meaning into an absurd quest.

Arp, Jean (German/French, 1886–1966)

Born Hans Arp, Jean Arp was a Surrealist artist and original member of the Dada group. His work includes textile, wood relief, sculpture, and collage. Arp also wrote essays and poetry, contributing to publications including *De Stijl* and *La Révolution surréaliste*. In the 1930s, following his association with the Paris group Abstraction-Création, Arp's work began to incorporate aspects of Constructivism, which translated into harder edges in his forms. His wife was the Surrealist artist Sophie Taeuber.

Artist book

A work of art in book form, the artist or artist's book uses the book as object as a medium for the expression of an artistic idea. While illustrated volumes have a long history, the concept of the book as a medium unto itself dates from the late nineteenth century. Whether as individual objects or editions, artist books have played a key role in the work of twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists, from Michael Snow's *Cover to Cover* (1975) to Joyce Wieland's *True Patriot Love* (1971), and Rodney Graham's *Dr. No* (1991).

assemblage

An assemblage, collage, or bricolage is a three-dimensional artwork created from found objects. The term "assemblage" was first used in the 1950s by the French artist Jean Dubuffet to describe his butterfly-wing collages; it was popularized in the United States in reference to the work of the American artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jim Dine.

Aster, Howard (Canadian, b.1943)

A writer, professor, and book publisher, Howard Aster is, with Mike Walsh, a



founder of Mosaic Press, which publishes non-fiction, fiction, and poetry by Canadian authors. He held a post in the political science department at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, from 1970 until 2000.

avant-garde

From the French for “vanguard” or “advance guard,” avant-garde entered discussions about art in the early nineteenth-century work of the socialist thinker Henri de Saint-Simon, who believed that artists had a role to play in building a new society. The meaning of “avant-garde” has shifted over the years, referring to artists in relation to their times rather than to a particular group of artists working at a specific time in history. It connotes radicalism and rejection of a status quo and is often associated with work that is provocative and confrontational.

Aveline, Claude (French, 1901–1991)

Born in Paris to Russian-Jewish parents who had fled persecution in their home country, Claude Aveline is the pseudonym of Evgen or Eugène Avtsine. He adopted the name in his late teens and would publish under it throughout his life, with the exception of a period during the German occupation of France in the Second World War during which he used the pen name Minervois. A prolific author and active member of the French Resistance during the war, Aveline wrote poetry, novels, memoir, and essays, was cited as an influence by Albert Camus, and was an important figure in the literary culture of Paris in the twentieth century.

Bartók, Béla (Hungarian, 1881–1945)

A composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist, Béla Bartók brought Hungarian folk influences to his classical compositions. Along with Zoltán Kodály, in the early years of the twentieth century he collected and transcribed traditional music throughout rural Hungary. His compositions made use of the dissonance and dynamic rhythms he discovered through his research and incorporated the influences of both nineteenth-century classical composers and twentieth-century modernists. Unable to remain in Hungary as Nazi power extended through Europe, Bartók immigrated to New York in 1940.

Baxter&, Iain (Canadian, b. 1936)

A seminal figure in the history of Conceptual art in Canada. In 1966, he co-founded, with Ingrid Baxter, the N.E. Thing Co. Conceptual artists’ collective, and that same year launched the gallery and the visual arts program at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C. His work typically incorporates photography, performance, and installations. In 2005, Iain Baxter changed his name to Iain Baxter& to reflect his non-authorial approach to art production.

Beckett, Samuel (Irish, 1906–1989)

Working in both English and French, Samuel Beckett wrote novels, poetry, and essays before gaining renown with his play *Waiting for Godot* in 1953. His narratives, involving characters who suffer through extreme and absurd situations in which meaning is illusory, focus on a kind of elemental humanity stripped of the trappings of society. He is one of the primary authors of the French theatre of the absurd. Beckett won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969.



Biomorphic Abstraction

A form of abstraction that draws on rounded, natural forms, "biomorphic" appears as a descriptive term for abstract art around the 1930s, though it is not limited to this time period. It can be seen in the design elements of Art Nouveau and in the surrealist paintings and sculptures of Jean Arp and Joan Miró, as well as in the work of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth, and in American design from the 1940s through the 1960s.

Blom, Willem A. (South African/Canadian, b. 1927)

An artist and curator, Willem (Wim) Adriaan Blom was research curator at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from 1962 to 1968, when he became an administrator; in 1963 he was the founding editor of the National Gallery of Canada Bulletin. After leaving his post at the gallery in 1970, he devoted himself to painting, producing primarily ordered, still-life compositions of domestic objects rendered in a stark, realistic style.

Boccioni, Umberto (Italian, 1882–1916)

A painter, sculptor, and Futurist theorist, Umberto Boccioni was one of the authors of the 1910 "Manifesto of Futurist Painting" and the 1912 "Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture," which advocated a style built on Filippo Marinetti's Futurist philosophy of violence, speed, and power. His paintings capture the dynamic energy of the movement in swirling, fragmented figures; his sculptures draw on Cubist principles, which he adapted to Futurist themes executed in unconventional materials including wood and cement.

Brancusi, Constantin (Romanian, 1876–1957)

An abstract sculptor, whose unique focus on expressing natural forms as simply as possible, Constantin Brancusi influenced later sculptors, including Amedeo Modigliani and Carl Andre. Active for most of his life in Paris, Brancusi became known in America following his inclusion in the Armory Show, the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art.

Buñuel, Luis (Spanish/Mexican, 1900–1983)

A Surrealist filmmaker, Luis Buñuel began his career with *Un chien andalou*, 1929, in collaboration with Salvador Dalí. Finding himself in conflict with Fascist Spain, Buñuel lived in exile from 1936 to 1960, settling in Mexico City in 1949, where he created small commercial films that nevertheless remain rooted in his Communist politics, eroticism, Surrealism, and rejection of religion. After he returned to Europe in the 1960s, Buñuel's later works such as *Belle de jour*, 1967, and *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie*, 1972, brought to a wide audience his Surrealist conception of a world in which violent dreams erupt into chaos.

Cage, John (American, 1912–1992)

An avant-garde composer, John Cage worked from principles of randomness and indeterminacy, his influence extending beyond minimalist and electronic music to conceptual and performance art. Perhaps his best-known piece is 4'33", in which a performer remains silent on stage, often seated at a piano, for an unspecified amount of time. Other works relied on the *I Ching* to generate structure, or were composed for a prepared piano—prepared in that Cage



inserted objects into the strings to add a percussive element to the instrument. He had a long romantic partnership and artistic collaboration with modern dance pioneer Merce Cunningham.

Calder, John (Canadian/British, 1927–2018)

Born in Montreal into a wealthy timber family, John Calder was the founder of the London, England, publishing house John Calder Publishers. A dynamic figure in the literary world, beginning in the 1950s he published avant-garde British, American, and European authors, challenging obscenity laws and promoting writers from Eugène Ionesco and Marguerite Duras to Hubert Selby Jr. Calder was an especially strong supporter of the work of Samuel Beckett, a long-time friend, whose plays he both produced and published.

Camus, Albert (French, 1913–1960)

A major writer and intellectual of the twentieth century, Camus infused his work with philosophy and revolutionary politics and was profoundly influenced by his upbringing in Algeria (then a French territory). He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957, at the age of forty-four.

Colville, Alex (Canadian, 1920–2013)

A painter, muralist, draftsman, and engraver whose highly representational images verge on the surreal. Colville's paintings typically depict everyday scenes of rural Canadian life imbued with an uneasy quality. Since his process was meticulous—the paint applied dot by dot—he produced only three or four paintings or serigraphs per year. (See *Alex Colville: Life & Work* by Ray Cronin.)

Constructivism

Emerging in Russia in the early 1920s, Constructivism was an artistic trend that championed a materialist, non-emotional, utilitarian approach to art and linked art to design, industry, and social usefulness. The term continues to be used generally to describe abstract art that employs lines, planes, and other visual elements in composing abstract geometric images of a precise and impersonal nature.

Cubism

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, Cubism is defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

Dada

A multidisciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and readymades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

Dalí, Salvador (Spanish, 1904–1989)

The star of the Surrealists and one of his era's most exuberant personalities, Dalí is best known for his naturalistically rendered dreamscapes. *The*



Persistence of Memory, 1931, with its melting clock faces, remains one of the twentieth century's most parodied artworks.

Dault, Gary Michael (Canadian, b.1939)

An art critic, writer, and artist, Gary Michael Dault has written extensively on the work of Canadian artists, including reviews, catalogues, gallery guides, and monographs. From the 1970s he covered the Toronto art scene, including a decade-long column, *Gallery Going*, which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* Saturday edition. Gault was awarded the Order of Canada in 2018 for his work bringing art to a wide public.

Dubuffet, Jean (French, 1901–1985)

A rebellious avant-garde artist whose career spanned some fifty years and encompassed painting, sculpting, and printmaking. Dubuffet railed against intellectual authority in culture, countering it with art brut (literally, "raw art"). His oeuvre evidences frequent shifts in style and impassioned experimentation.

Eisenstein, Sergei (Russian, 1898–1948)

Born in Riga, Latvia (at the time part of the Russian Empire), Sergei Eisenstein was an influential Soviet filmmaker. He developed the idea of montage—inserting images independent of the film's main action to generate psychological impact—and wrote theoretical works describing the essential place of the technique in his understanding of film. Working in the U.S.S.R. and Mexico, Eisenstein made films using recent history (*Battleship Potemkin*, 1925) and medieval epic (*Alexander Nevsky*, 1938) to depict social issues, espousing a Bolshevik ideal of collectivism and formalist principles that often put him at odds with the Stalinist government.

formalism

The study of art by analyzing a work's form and style to determine its meaning and quality. It emphasizes colour, texture, composition, and line over narrative, concept, or social and political context. In the 1960s, the American critic Clement Greenberg strongly championed formalism. By the end of the 1960s, postmodernism and conceptual art began to challenge formalism as a system of critique.

found object

A found object can be any object—natural or fabricated, whole or fragmentary—taken up by an artist and integrated into an artwork. Artists working with found objects may focus on particular types or styles, personal or cultural meaning, or formal elements in choosing what to include in their work. An example is Picasso's *Bull's Head*, 1942, made of a bicycle seat and handlebars.

French existentialism

A mid-twentieth-century cultural movement that manifested in literature, film, and philosophy, French existentialism is popularly associated with the philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Its main ideas are that human existence is essentially inexplicable and meaningless and that human beings are free and independent actors.

**Fried, Rose (American, 1896–1970)**

A New York City art gallery owner, Rose Fried took over the Pinacoteca Gallery in the 1940s, changing its name to Rose Fried Gallery in 1944. An advocate for abstract art, she introduced the work of European abstractionists including Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky to an American public. Fried also represented Cubist, Futurist, and Latin American modernist artists.

Fuller, R. Buckminster (American, 1895–1983)

An architect, systems theorist, and engineer, Richard Buckminster Fuller began his career working on technologies for modular housing but went on to develop futurist, utopian design propositions that attempted to address global issues of energy and industrialization. His experiments in geometry led to his invention of the geodesic dome, a form of construction the strength of which increases logarithmically in relation to its size and an icon of 1960s design both mainstream (the U.S. pavilion at Expo 67) and countercultural (Drop City, a southern Colorado artists' community formed in 1965).

Futurism

Founded in 1909, this Italian movement in modern art and literature embraced elements of Cubism and Neo-Impressionism. The Futurist aesthetic idealized technological advances, war, dynamism, and the energy of modern life.

Among the most renowned Futurist artists are Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, and Luigi Russolo.

Gaucher, Yves (Canadian, 1934–2000)

An internationally recognized abstract painter and printmaker, associated with the Plasticiens. Gaucher's inquisitive nature made him an individualistic figure and artist who drew from many sources, including jazz and atonal music, Georges Braque, Mark Rothko, and the New York Abstractionists. He fought to modernize printmaking and open the medium up to experimental and innovative techniques. Gaucher founded the Associations des peintures-gravures de Montréal in 1960 and was named a Member of the Order of Canada in 1981. (See *Yves Gaucher: Life & Work* by Roald Nasgaard.)

General Idea (Canadian, active 1969–1994)

A prolific, provocative, and socially critical artist collective comprising of AA Bronson (Michael Tims, b.1946), Felix Partz (Ronald Gabe, 1945–1994), and Jorge Zontal (Slobodan Saia-Levy, 1944–1994). General Idea formed in Toronto out of the countercultural scenes of the experimental free school Rochdale College and Theatre Passe Muraille. Their conceptual projects included those associated with Miss General Idea and series dealing with the AIDS crisis. The collective founded FILE in 1972 and the artist-run centre Art Metropole in 1973. (See *General Idea: Life & Work* by Sarah E.K. Smith.)

Giacometti, Alberto (Swiss, 1901–1966)

Primarily known as a sculptor, Alberto Giacometti was also a painter, draftsman, and printmaker. Although his early, abstract work was Surrealist with Cubist influences, Giacometti turned to sculpting the figure after the Second World War as well as to phenomenology—a way of understanding the world through perception and experience—increasing the size of his sculptures



and thinning the human bodies they depicted until they seemed to almost disappear in space. Frail and isolated, they were written about by the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and caught the attention of Samuel Beckett, for whom Giacometti designed the first set for his play *Waiting for Godot*.

Goya, Francisco (Spanish, 1746–1828)

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was an influential painter of the Spanish Enlightenment whose expressive style would guide the Romantic, realist, and Impressionist painters of the nineteenth century, particularly French artists including Edouard Manet. Though he rose to prominence as a court painter for the Spanish monarchy, Goya's drawings and etchings of the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars and Spanish struggles for independence in the early nineteenth century, none of them published during his lifetime, would prove some of his most enduring work.

Green, Abraham (Al) (Canadian, 1925–2016)

Al Green was a Canadian real estate developer, artist, and philanthropist supporting Jewish community programs and arts causes including the Art Gallery of Ontario. In the 1950s, Green and his company Greenwin Construction participated in Toronto's post-Second World War housing boom, building family homes and rental high-rises. In the 1970s, he turned his attention to sculpture and was mentored by the Toronto artists Sorel Etrog and Maryon Kantaroff. Green's work can be found in public spaces throughout the city and in private collections, as well as alongside work by Etrog, Kantaroff, and others in the Al Green Sculpture Park in midtown Toronto.

Hart House Gallery

Now the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, part of the Art Museum at the University of Toronto, Hart House Gallery is an exhibition venue and collecting institution associated with University College at the University of Toronto. Current acquisitions for the collection focus on work by living Canadian artists, especially emerging and mid-career artists of First Nations and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Hepworth, Barbara (British, 1903–1975)

Hepworth was a modernist sculptor and early English abstractionist. Like Henry Moore, a close friend since their student days at the Royal College of Art in London, she engaged in direct carving, where the sculptor works from the form suggested by the materials rather than a pre-established model. Her mature work is characterized by pierced and perforated forms that bring attention to the voids contained within the work.

Hirshhorn, Joseph (Latvian /American, 1899–1981)

Born in Latvia, Joseph Hirshhorn was a financier and mining entrepreneur who worked as a Wall Street stockbroker in New York City until just prior to the crash of 1929. Afterward, he relocated to Canada, where he made a fortune in the 1950s by staking the initial claims to what would become the Elliot Lake, Ontario, uranium mines. An avid art collector, Hirshhorn endowed the



Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., which opened in 1974 with the donation of six thousand works from his collection; an additional six thousand were donated following his death.

Humanism

The contemporary definition of humanism is a system of ethics centred on human needs and the value of human life. Humanists believe that morality comes from thinking critically and rationally about what it means to value human beings. In the West, earlier forms of humanism can be traced to the Roman Republic, where *humanitas* was used to refer, alternatively, to good will toward others and an education in the liberal arts. This latter conception of humanism is connected to the intellectual disciplines of the humanities.

Ionesco, Eugène (Romanian/French, 1909–1994)

Born Eugen Ionescu, Eugène Ionesco was a playwright whose first one-act play, *La cantatrice chauve* (*The Bald Soprano*) (1949), is credited as the first example of what would become the Theatre of the Absurd. Modelling exchanges between characters on the repetitive questions and answers of the textbook he was using to learn English, Ionesco created a series of interactions of escalating absurdity in which the conventions of modern life are revealed to be alienating, illogical constructs. His later work built on these themes of futility and the estrangement and fragmentation of the self. Ionesco was inducted into the Académie française in 1970.

Isaac-Rose, Edith (American, 1929–2018)

A painter, Edith Isaac-Rose was born Edith Ganansky-Teitelbaum and took her parents' first names as her professional surname. Trained at the Art Institute of Chicago, she was originally an Abstract Expressionist but began producing political, figurative work based on newspaper images in the 1980s. In addition to paintings, she produced drawings and embroideries.

Janco, Marcel (Romanian/Israeli, 1895–1984)

A co-founder of the Dada movement, Marcel Janco was an artist, architect, and art theorist. Following several years in Zurich, Switzerland, as a student, he returned to Romania and shifted from the radical anti-art position of the Dadaists to supporting a more moderate Constructivism, producing art and contributing to various publications while working as an architect. In 1941, he and his family fled war-torn Europe for British Mandate Palestine, which became the modern state of Israel in 1948. In 1953 he founded the cooperative artists' village Ein Hod.

Jarvis, Alan (Canadian, 1915–1972)

The director of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, from 1955 to 1959, Jarvis was also a sculptor, writer, and editor. A charismatic figure, he was the host of the 1957 CBC television series *The Things We See* and used his position at the National Gallery to bring ideas about art to a wider audience. He oversaw the completion and opening of the Canadian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale from 1957 to 1958.

**Joyce, James (Irish, 1882–1941)**

A modernist writer born in Dublin, Ireland, James Joyce is best known for his 1922 novel *Ulysses*, a stream-of-consciousness retelling of Homer's *Odyssey* that tracks its protagonist, Leopold Bloom, through a single day in the author's Dublin. In novels, short stories, poetry, and essays, he experimented with language in ways that transformed the possibilities for literature in the twentieth century, combining foreign words with English to create neologisms in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) and fictionalizing his childhood in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). Although he set his fiction in the city of his birth, Joyce lived primarily elsewhere in Europe from 1909 until his death.

Kandinsky, Wassily (Russian, 1866–1944)

An artist, teacher, and philosopher who settled in Germany and later in France, Kandinsky was central to the development of abstract art. Much of his work conveys his interest in the relationships between colour, sound, and emotion. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), his famous treatise on abstraction, draws on mysticism and theories of divinity.

Klee, Paul (Swiss-German, 1879–1940)

Primarily known as a painter of prodigious energy and imagination—his output comprises an estimated nine thousand artworks—Klee was also a printmaker, art writer, and beloved teacher, first at the Bauhaus and later at the Düsseldorf Academy.

Kolb, Eugene (Hungarian/Israeli, 1898–1959)

The art critic Eugene Kolb began his career as a writer and publisher in Budapest, Hungary, but left the country as one of more than sixteen hundred Jewish refugees to escape on the Kastner train in 1944. After a brief stay in Switzerland, he immigrated to British Mandate Palestine (which became the modern state of Israel in 1948), where he continued to write and engaged with the nascent Israeli art world. In 1952, he became the director of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, where he worked to establish the museum's collection and promote Israeli artists until his death in 1959.

Levine, Les (Irish/American, b.1935)

An important figure in twentieth-century Conceptual art, Les Levine's work addresses questions of consumerism and disposability. Levine is noted particularly for his pioneering use of mass media, including television, radio, billboards, posters, and telephone conversations; he was among the first artists to work with videotape. Born in Dublin, he lived in Canada in the 1960s and early 1970s.

lost-wax process (cire perdue)

Lost-wax process is a metal-casting technique in which a mould is formed around a wax model, which is then melted away to leave a space into which molten metal is poured. The process can either involve a solid wax model or a wax shell that is used to create a hollow metal sculpture. The lost-wax process has been used to cast metal for approximately six thousand years.



Maquette

A scale model of an unfinished sculpture, architectural project, or theatre set, a maquette functions as a sketch for a three-dimensional work in progress. It may be used to test formal or compositional considerations or, in the case of a large commissioned work, to give the client an idea of the how an artist's or architect's proposal will function in space.

McLuhan, Marshall (Canadian, 1911–1980)

A media theorist and public intellectual, Marshall McLuhan became an international star with his 1964 book *Understanding Media* and garnered a committed following within the 1960s counterculture. His phrase "the medium is the message" has reached the status of popular aphorism. He developed and directed the Centre for Culture and Technology (now the McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology) at the University of Toronto.

Minimalism

A branch of abstract art characterized by extreme restraint in form, Minimalism was most popular among American artists from the 1950s to 1970s. Although Minimalism can be expressed in any medium, it is most commonly associated with sculpture; principal Minimalists include Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Tony Smith. Among the Minimalist painters were Agnes Martin, Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, and Frank Stella.

Miró, Joan (Spanish, 1893–1983)

A prolific artist and important figure in the history of abstract art in the twentieth century, Joan Miró engaged with painting, sculpting, printmaking, and decorative arts. Throughout his long career, Miró sustained thematic interest in the influence of his native landscape on his artistic creation. French Surrealism influenced his work, though he is recognized to have developed his own deeply personal style.

modernism

A movement extending from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century in all the arts, modernism rejected academic traditions in favour of innovative styles developed in response to contemporary industrialized society. Modernist movements in the visual arts have included Gustave Courbet's Realism, and later Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism and on to abstraction. By the 1960s, anti-authoritarian postmodernist styles such as Pop art, Conceptual art, and Neo-Expressionism blurred the distinction between high art and mass culture.

Mokady, Moshe (Polish/Israeli, 1902–1975)

Born Moshe Brandstatter, Moshe Mokady moved with his family to British Mandate Palestine, which became the modern state of Israel in 1948, in 1920. He studied art in Vienna and Paris, developing a style that moved from Cubism through Expressionism to a form of abstraction influenced by the Israeli landscape. In addition to painting, Mokady was a stage designer for various Israeli theatre companies and, from 1952 to 1965, served as the director of the



Avni Institute of Painting and Sculpture (Machon Avni in Hebrew) in Tel Aviv. He was the leader among a group of artists who founded the artists' community of Ein Hod in 1953.

Moore, Henry (British, 1898–1986)

One of the twentieth century's most important sculptors, Henry Moore was influenced by non-European sculpture; later he also drew from natural sources, such as bones and pebbles. His technique most often involved carving directly into his material, whether wood, stone, or plaster.

Moos, Walter (German/Canadian, 1926–2013)

The founder of Gallery Moos in Toronto, Walter Moos was born into a German Jewish family of art dealers who operated a gallery in Karlsruhe, Germany. Moos fled to France and Switzerland during the Second World War before arriving in New York City, where he spent twelve years. In 1959, he moved to Toronto to open his gallery, becoming an important fixture in the cultural scene that emerged in the city's Yorkville neighbourhood. A champion of modernist art, Moos played a key role in fostering the careers of Canadian artists, including Sorel Etrog and Gershon Iskowitz.

Murray, Robert (Canadian, b.1936)

A New York-based, Saskatchewan-raised sculptor trained in Saskatoon, Regina, and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, Robert Murray moved permanently to the United States in 1960. That same year, Saskatoon awarded him the first of his many public commissions. His work is held by major institutions throughout the United States and Canada.

N.E. Thing Co.

The incorporated business and artistic handle of Iain and Ingrid Baxter, N.E. Thing Co. was founded by the couple in 1966 as a way to explore the interactions between their daily lives and various cultural systems. The artworks produced by the N.E. Thing Co. are among the earliest examples of Conceptual art in Canada. It was disbanded in 1978.

National Gallery of Canada

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the governor general, the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

Oppenheim, Meret (German/Swiss, 1913–1985)

The artist Meret Oppenheim began her career among the Paris Surrealists in the 1930s. She was the muse and model for several of Man Ray's photographs and created a piece, *Object*, 1936, a cup, saucer, and spoon covered in fur, that became an archetypal example of the movement's aesthetics and was the first work by a woman artist to be acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in



New York City. After a twenty-year pause in her career, during which time she distanced herself from the Surrealists, Oppenheim began to make art again in the 1950s.

patination

Patination is the development or creation of a patina, or film, on the surface of a material due to age and exposure. In copper, bronze, and similar metals, a green patina, or verdigris, gives historic buildings and monuments their distinctive colour. Depending on the conditions under which it occurs, patination can protect materials, especially metals, from other types of damage and corrosion.

Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

Pop art

A movement of the late 1950s to early 1970s in Britain and the United States, Pop art adopted imagery from commercial design, television, and cinema. Pop art's most recognized proponents are Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein.

Ray, Man (American, 1890–1976)

Born Emmanuel Radnizky, Man Ray was a Dada and Surrealist artist and photographer and the only American associated with both groups. After working with Marcel Duchamp in New York City, Ray moved to Paris, where he began his experiments in photography and developed cameraless photographs (photograms or rayographs) by placing objects on light-sensitive paper. He also created ready-mades and films and published photographic portraits in fashion magazines and collaborated with the photographer Lee Miller, the subject of much of his work in the 1930s.

Restany, Pierre (French, 1930–2003)

An influential art critic and curator, Pierre Restany was one of the founders of the *nouveau réalisme* (new realism) art movement in the 1960s. Theorized by Restany in conversations with the French artist Yves Klein, the movement was anchored in an avant-garde approach to reality and rejected both representation and abstraction. As a critic he went on to discuss contemporary art and emerging media through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, until his death, including a particular interest in the relationship between art and urban planning. Beginning in 1963, Restany had a close association with the Italian art and architecture magazine *Domus*.

Richier, Germaine (French, 1902–1959)

Following the early success of her bronze, classical figures in the 1930s, the sculptor Germaine Richier went on to explore more personal and allegorical imagery, experimenting in ceramics, mosaic, and printmaking while continuing



to create works in bronze. In the years after the Second World War, she created figures that combined human and natural elements often contorted by expressions of anguish.

Sartre, Jean-Paul (French, 1905–1980)

Jean-Paul Sartre was a central figure in the development and spread of existentialism, a philosophy of existence that attempts to chart what it means to be human. His book *Being and Nothingness* (1943) is considered his masterpiece. Existentialist thinkers in his circle included Simone de Beauvoir, his long-time lover.

Schoenberg, Arnold (Austrian/American, 1874–1951)

Born into a Jewish family in Vienna, Arnold Schoenberg was a composer of modern music known for his atonal compositions and development of the twelve-tone method of composition. His earliest compositions drew on the influence of the Romantics and on that of composers such as Brahms and Mahler; later he moved away from tonality and then between atonal and tonal works constructed using his twelve-tone method. Schoenberg went to the United States when the Nazis rose to power in 1933 and settled in Los Angeles, where he taught at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles. His students included the American composer John Cage; while he was still in Europe his students included Alban Berg and Anton Webern.

Snow, Michael (Canadian, b.1928)

The paintings, films, photographs, sculptures, installations, and musical performances of artist Michael Snow have kept him in the spotlight for over sixty years. Snow's Walking Woman series of the 1960s holds a prominent place in Canadian art history. His contributions to visual art, experimental film, and music have been recognized internationally. (See *Michael Snow: Life & Work* by Martha Langford.)

Stravinsky, Igor (Russian/French/American, 1882–1971)

The composer, pianist, and conductor Igor Stravinsky earned notoriety for the riotous reception of his modernist ballet *The Rite of Spring*, with its discordant harmonies and dynamically syncopated rhythm, when it was performed in Paris by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1913. Though his career began with a series of ballets including *Rite* and *Petrushka* (1911) that drew on Russian folk tales and Expressionist musical influences, he would go on to compose neoclassical and serial pieces that help chart the progression of modernist music in the twentieth century. After establishing himself in Paris, Stravinsky moved to the United States in 1938, settling in Hollywood, California.

Surrealism

An early twentieth-century literary and artistic movement that began in Paris, Surrealism aimed to express the workings of the unconscious, free of convention and reason, and was characterized by fantastic images and incongruous juxtapositions. The movement spread globally, influencing film, theatre, and music.



Vancouver Biennale

Previously the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale, the Vancouver Biennale is a public art event that began in 1998 with a four-month-long exhibition of work by international sculptors along Vancouver's English Bay. Renamed in 2004, the Biennale now hosts both sculpture and new media work at outdoor venues throughout Vancouver and in the neighbouring cities of New Westminster, North Vancouver, Squamish, and Richmond, B.C. Work presented in the Biennale remains on display for two years.

Venice Biennale

Founded in 1895 as a biannual exhibition of avant-garde and contemporary art from participating countries, many of which have permanent pavilions in the Venice Giardini, a section of parkland that serves as the heart of the event. There have historically been several additions to the Biennale's programming, including film, theatre, and musical festivals. At present, the main events are the International Art Exhibition, which is held in odd-numbered years, and the International Architecture Exhibition (or Venice Biennale of Architecture), which is held in even-numbered years. Today, it regularly attracts more than 370,000 visitors. Canada has been participating since 1952.

Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden

Founded in 1961, Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden (now WZMH Architects) is a Toronto architecture firm. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was responsible for many significant modernist projects that were part of the transformation of Toronto's downtown, including the CN Tower and the Royal Bank Plaza. In the 1980s and 1990s, the firm expanded its practice internationally. Current clients are located across Canada and around the world.

Withrow, William (Canadian, 1926–2018)

As director of the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto from 1961 to 1991, William Withrow oversaw the gallery's expansion and the acquisition of significant portions of its collection, along with its adventurous recognition of contemporary Canadian and American art. He remains the gallery's longest-serving director and was responsible for the renovations that included the construction of the Sam and Ayala Zacks Pavilion, the Henry Moore Sculpture Centre, and the Canadian Wing. During his tenure, the gallery transitioned from its previous identity as the Art Gallery of Toronto to become a provincial institution with international stature.

Zacks, Ayala (also known as Ayala Ben-Tovim Fleg Zacks Abramov)

(Israeli/Canadian, 1912–2011)

Ayala Zacks was a collector of modernist European art and the work of Canadian and Israeli artists. Born in Jerusalem, she studied in Paris, where she met her first husband, Morris Fleg, a Resistance fighter during the Second World War; at his death in action, she joined the Resistance. In 1947 she moved to Toronto with her second husband, Samuel Zacks. Together they built a notable art collection while supporting the city's art scene, especially the Art Gallery of Toronto, renamed the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1966. Following her husband's death in 1970, Zacks donated a significant portion of her collection to the AGO and returned to Israel in 1976, where she and her third husband,



Zalman Abramov, were patrons of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Israel Museum. She continued that role herself after being widowed again in 1997.

Zacks, Samuel J. (Canadian, 1904–1970)

Born in Kingston, Ontario, Samuel J. (Sam) Zacks was a financier, art collector, and philanthropist. With his wife, Ayala Zacks, he amassed a collection of work focused on international modernism and on the work of Canadian and Israeli artists. Throughout his life, Zacks made numerous important donations to Canadian art institutions, in particular the Art Gallery of Toronto, which became the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in 1966. An active Zionist, he was also a strong supporter of Israeli institutions, including the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Significant bequests of artwork to the AGO and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art after his death helped both institutions to broaden their collections.

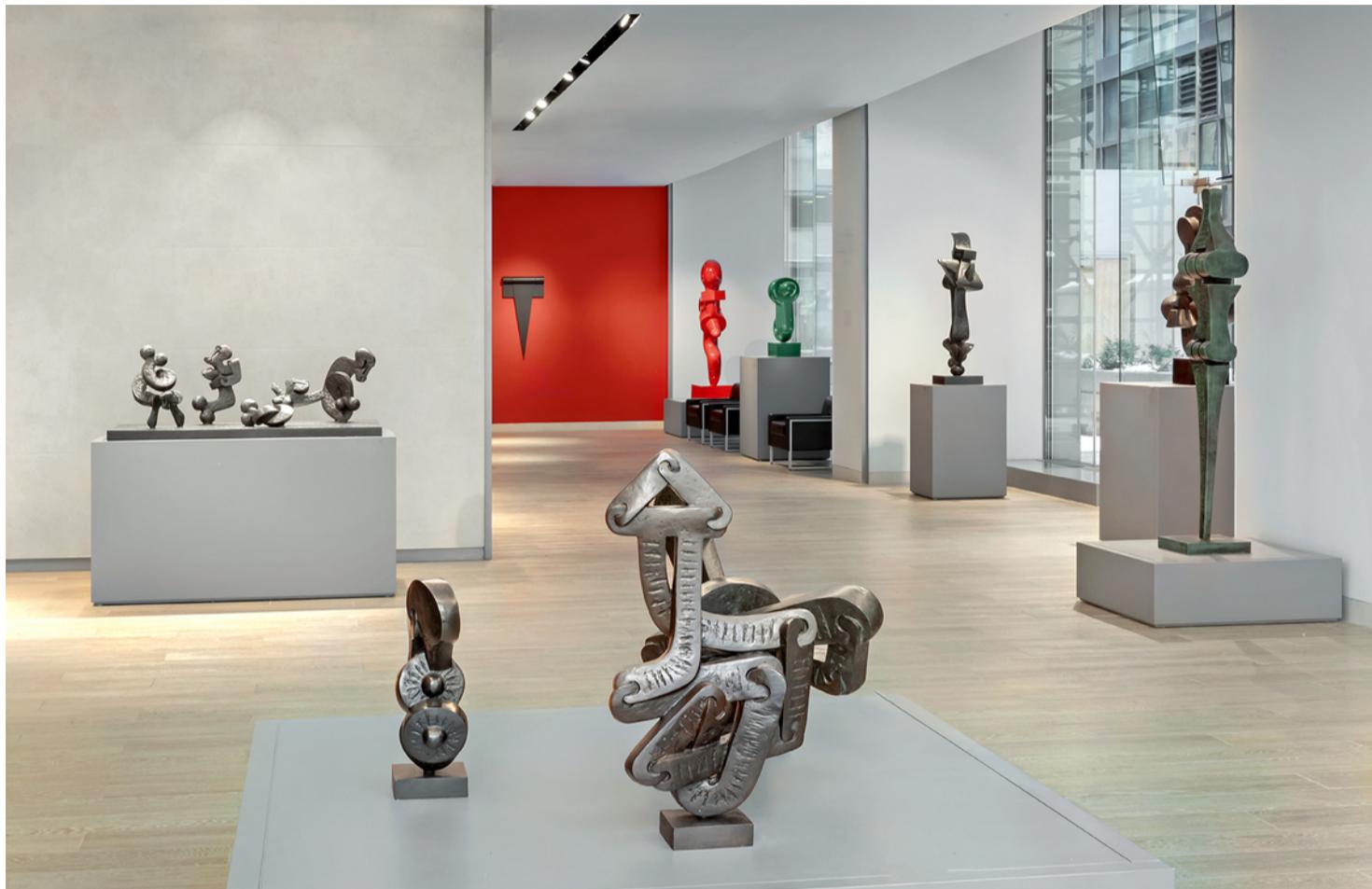
Zerafa, Boris (Egyptian/Canadian, 1933–2002)

Born in Cairo, Egypt, and trained in London, England, Boris Zerafa was an architect and a founding partner of the Toronto firm Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden (now WZMH Architects). His major projects include Toronto's Royal Bank Plaza and Calgary's City Hall—the firm was responsible for the modernist development of the downtowns of both cities and the design of Toronto's CN Tower. Zerafa was also involved in projects overseas, including in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as the firm expanded internationally in the 1980s and 1990s.



SOURCES & RESOURCES

Throughout his long career, Sorel Etrog participated in exhibitions around the world while maintaining his base in Canada from the early 1960s until his death in 2014. The literature around his art is extensive and varied, consisting of monographs by world-renowned art historians and critics, exhibition catalogues from prestigious national and international institutions, as well as numerous articles and reviews by leading writers. Etrog was himself a talented and prolific writer of both creative work and interpretive texts regarding his own work.



The Sorel Etrog Collection at The Hennick Family Wellness Gallery, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, 2020, photograph by Toni Hafkenscheid.

KEY EXHIBITIONS

1958 *Etrog Oil Paintings in Relief, Watercolors and Drawings*, ZOA House, Tel Aviv, Israel. Exhibition publication.

1959 *Etrog: Painting on Wood / Sculptures / Drawings*, Gallery Moos, Toronto. Exhibition publication.

1963 *Sorel Etrog: Sculpture*, Rose Fried Gallery, New York. Exhibition publication.

Fifteen Canadian Artists, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1965 *Etrog*. Gallery Moos, Toronto; Felix Landau Gallery, Los Angeles; Galerie Dresdnère, Montreal, and Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York. Exhibition publication.

1966 Canadian Pavilion (with Yves Gaucher and Alex Colville) at the 23rd Biennale di Venezia, Venice. Exhibition publication.



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- 1967** *Architecture and Sculpture in Canada*, Canadian Government Pavilion, Expo 67, Montreal.

Sculpture '67, An Open-Air Exhibition of Canadian Sculpture Presented by the National Gallery of Canada as Part of Its Centennial Program, City Hall, Toronto. Exhibition publication.

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- 1968** *Sorel Etrog, 1958-1968*, Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 1968. Exhibition publication.

(Through December 1969) *Sorel Etrog: One Decade*. A travelling exhibition in Ontario, organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (Scarborough College, Toronto; London Public Library and Art Museum; Rothmans Art Gallery, Stratford; McMaster University, Hamilton; Rodman Hall, St. Catharines; University of Guelph; Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston; Glenhyrst Art Gallery of Brant, Brantford; Waterloo Lutheran University; Art Gallery of Oshawa). Exhibition publication.

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- 1971** *IV Exposition internationale de sculpture contemporaine*, Musée Rodin, Paris.

Artists at Dartmouth: A Retrospective of Selected Artists in Residence at Dartmouth College since 1962, New City Hall, Boston.

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- 1973** *Art 4 '73: Basel. Internazionale Kunstmesse*, Kunstmuseum, Basel, Switzerland.

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- 1977** *Sorel Etrog: Recent Works*, Marlborough Godard, Toronto; Galerie Mira Godard, Montreal; Marlborough Gallery, New York.

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- 1978** *L'oiseau qui n'existe pas*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

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- 1993** *The Modernists: 20th Century Sculpture from Auguste Rodin to Anthony Caro*, Koffler Gallery, Toronto.

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- 1996** *The Cult of the Head: Sculptures by Sorel Etrog*, Singapore Art Museum. Exhibition publication.

Shape Shifters, Art Gallery of Hamilton. Exhibition publication.

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- 1999** *Word and Image: Samuel Beckett and the Visual Text*, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.



2000 *Sorel Etrog, Composites*, Christopher Cutts Gallery, Toronto. Exhibition publication.

2008 *The Links: Meditations on the Human Condition*, Simon Fraser University Gallery and Buschlen Mowatt Galleries, Vancouver. Exhibition publication.

2013 *Sorel Etrog: Five Decades*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Exhibition publication.

2016 *The Sorel Etrog Collection at the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery*, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. Exhibition publication for gallery opening.

SELECTED WRITINGS AND ARTIST BOOKS BY ETROG

In addition to his creative work as sculptor, painter, draftsman, and more, Etrog wrote a range of experimental texts, including plays, poetry, and short stories, as well as the artist's books on which he collaborated with noted thinkers and writers.

With Claude Aveline. "L'oiseau qui n'existe pas," Venice: Edition del Cavallino, 1967.

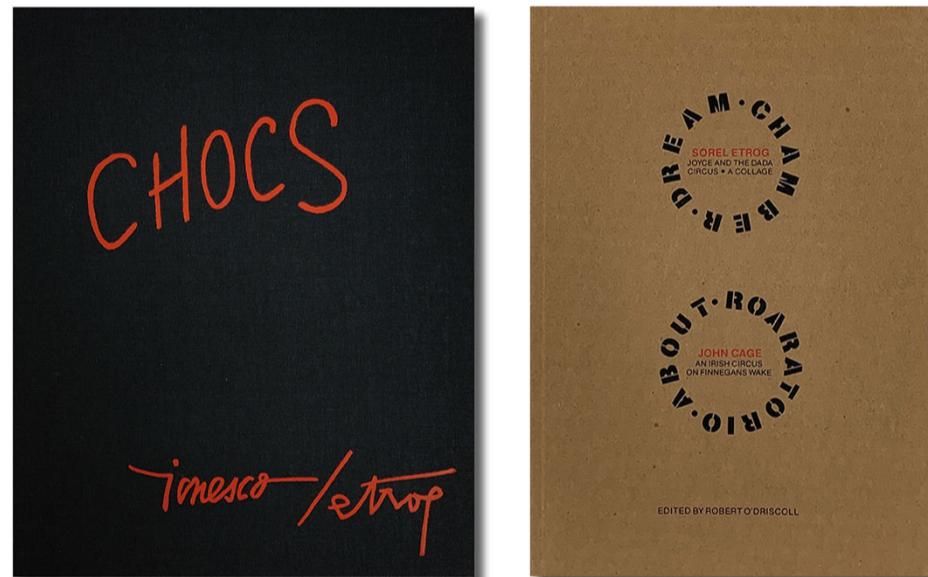
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LEFT: Cover of artist-book *Chocs*, with text by Eugène Ionesco designed and illustrated by Sorel Etrog (New York: Martha Jackson Gallery, 1969). RIGHT: Cover of *Dream Chamber: Joyce and the Dada Circus, a collage* by Sorel Etrog. *About Roaratorio: an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* by John Cage, ed. by Robert O'Driscoll (Toronto: Black Brick Press, Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1982).

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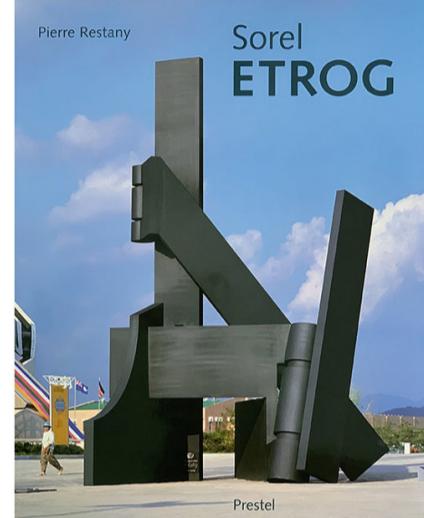
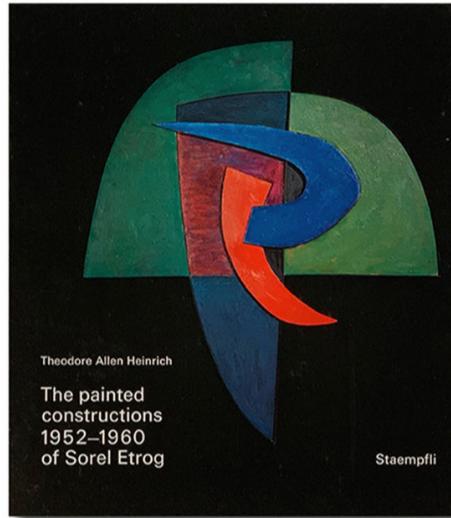
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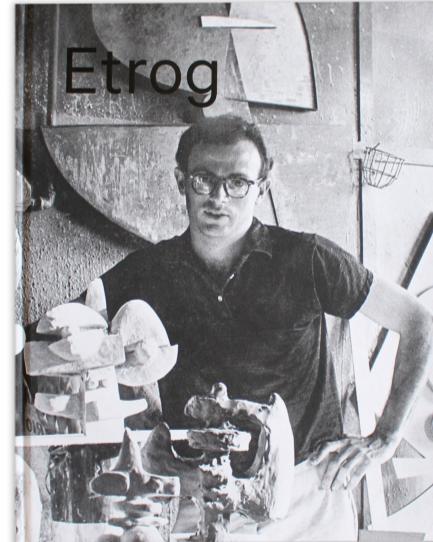
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Withrow, William J. *Sorel Etrog: Sculpture*. Toronto: Wilfeld Publishing, 1967.



LEFT: Cover of *The Painted Constructions 1952-60 of Sorel Etrog* by Theodore Allen Heinrich (Berne: Switzerland: Staempfli et Cie Ltd. 1968). RIGHT: Cover of *Sorel Etrog* by Pierre Restany (New York: Prestel, 2001).



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Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. *The Sorel Etrog fonds at the Art Gallery of Ontario is an indispensable source for Etrog scholars. The archive consists of records of the artist's personal life and professional career, including but not limited to photographs of the artist and his art, press clippings, invitations, and exhibition catalogues, correspondence with important figures of his times, information regarding exhibitions and acquisitions by individuals and museums, and administrative records related to various of the artist's projects and collaborations. It also includes many preliminary drawings and works on paper as well as some preparatory maquettes for sculptures.*

The Estate of Sorel Etrog: <https://www.soreletrog.com/>

KEY INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS

Sorel Etrog was interviewed in 2013, in conjunction with his AGO retrospective
<http://www.soreletrog.com/interview-with-sorel-etrog>

"A Dialogue between Sorel Etrog and Marshall McLuhan Regarding *Spiral*," in David Moos, *Sorel Etrog: Human Traces* (Oakville, ON; Buffalo, NY: Mosaic Press, n.d.), 65-71 (unpublished).

AUDIO AND VISUAL

For the 2013 Etrog retrospective at the AGO, a series of interviews with key people in Etrog's life and career were conducted.

Gary Michael Dault interview:
<http://www.soreletrog.com/gary-michael-dault-on-sorel-etrog>

Yael Dunkelman interview:
<http://www.soreletrog.com/yael-dunkelman-on-sorel-etrog>

Gregory Humeniuk interview:
<http://www.ago.net/interviews#greg>

Walter Moos interview:
<http://www.soreletrog.com/walter-moos-on-sorel-etrog>

Joyce Zemans interview:
<http://www.soreletrog.com/joyce-zemans-on-sorel-etrog>



Still from *Walter Moos on Sorel Etrog*, c.2013, Art Gallery of Ontario.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ALMA MIKULINSKY

Alma Mikulinsky is an art historian and authority on the European avant-garde, with a focus on the work of Pablo Picasso. She earned her doctorate in Art History, Criticism, and Conservation at the University of Toronto, and has held a number of research fellowships, including at the University of Hong Kong's Society of Scholars in the Humanities and at Ryerson University's Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre. She was assistant professor at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and held a visiting assistant professorship at the Universidad del Desarrollo in Santiago de Chile. Currently she works as an art consultant and is an academic advisor to Remai Modern, where she helped organize the international symposium *Picasso and Co: The Collaborative work of Pablo Picasso*.

Mikulinsky also works internationally as a curator and has organized exhibitions in Canada, China, Israel, Latin America, and Europe. Her curatorial work includes a critically recognized exhibition of Picasso's ceramics, as well as exhibitions of contemporary art and photography, including upcoming shows at The Art Gallery of Windsor, The McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and Remai Modern. Her writing has been published by Tate Modern, The McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Musée National Picasso-Paris. She is the author of *Picasso Ceramics from the Nina Miller Collection*.



"I began studying the work of Sorel Etrog on returning to Canada after a seven-year period living and working on four continents. His work fascinated me intellectually and spoke to me artistically; I was drawn to his endless intellectual curiosity and boundless creativity. Moreover, his art moved me on a personal level: his experience as a Second World War survivor and as an immigrant in Israel echoes my own family's story, and I was touched when, for the first time in my career, I was able to use Hebrew—my mother tongue—in my research."

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the Author

I would like to acknowledge the generosity of this book's Title Sponsor,
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This book would not have been possible without the support and confidence of Sorel Etrog's family. Jonathan Gendler, the artist's nephew and executor of The Sorel Etrog Estate, is the best friend an art historian can have; we spent many hours at the Estate offices pouring over and talking about his uncle's art. Jonathan responded to literally hundreds of emails and text messages, helped in unearthing information and facilitated introductions to key members of the Etrog community, including, most crucially, his mother, the artist's sister Zipora Gendler. Zippy, thank you for entrusting me with your life story and sharing with me your memories of your family's time in Romania and early years in Israel; I am honoured and grateful for having won your trust. Thank you for opening your personal photo album and allowing me to include these wonderful images.

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Sorel Etrog, *Source 2*, 1967, marble, 125.7 x 55.9 x 48.3 cm. Courtesy Miriam Shiell Fine Art, Toronto. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).

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Biography: Sorel Etrog at the Zacks' Southampton Wood Workshop, 1959. Photograph by L. Brown. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Key Works: Sorel Etrog, *Dream Chamber*, 1976. (See below for details.)



Significance and Critical Issues: Sorel Etrog, *Tribal Dancers in Blue*, 1968-69. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Jonathan Gendler.



Style and Technique: Sorel Etrog, *Quartet Study*, 1973. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.



Sources and Resources: Sorel Etrog in his studio, early 1970s. (See below for details.)



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Where to See: View of Sorel Etrog sculptures in Frank Gehry-designed Galleria Italia, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2013. Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.

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The Bodifestation of the Kite, 1984, installation view at Grunwald Gallery, Toronto. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161724). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Bull Sketch, 1969. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161720). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Julie Trempe.



Ceremonial Figure, 1968. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



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Costume design for dancer from the play *The Celtic Hero: Four Cuchulain Plays by W.B. Yeats*, 1979. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161730). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Paul Smith.



Couple IV '65 Study, 1965. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.



Dream Chamber, 1976. Hennick Family Wellness Gallery, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.



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King and Queen, 1990. Windsor Sculpture Garden. Courtesy of the City of Windsor. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Moses, 1963-65. University of Lethbridge Art Collection, Alberta, donated by the House of Seagram Limited, Montreal, 1968 (1968.1). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Prayer for a New Moon, 1952. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



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The Rite of Spring, 1967-68. Hennick Family, Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.



Ritual Dancer, 1960-62. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of Mrs. O.D. Vaughan, 1980 (80/100). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Shelter, 1976. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Spiral (still frames), 1974. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Sunbird II, 1962–64. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchase, Corporations' Subscription Endowment, 1965 (64/30). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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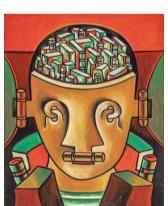
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Waterbury, 1961. McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2018.4). Photo credit: Courtesy of McMichael Canadian Art Collection. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



War Remembrance Study, c.1959. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Craig Boyko.



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War Remembrance II, 1960-61. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Saidye and Samuel Bronfman Collection of Canadian Art (1966.1516). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: MMFA, Christine Guest.



White Scaffolding, 1958. Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970 (71/156). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Canadian National Vimy Memorial, 1922-36, by Walter S. Allward. Government of Canada. Courtesy of Veterans Affairs Canada. Photo credit: Dean MacDonald.



Canadian Pavilion in Venice with *Moses*, 1963-65 (foreground), and *Mother and Child*, 1960-62 (background), 1966. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Giannina Frugoni.



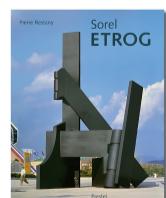
Circular Relief, c.1925, by Naum Gabo. Tate Modern, London, U.K. (T02142). © Nina & Graham Williams (2020). Photo credit: Tate Modern.



Composites in Sorel Etrog's studio nearby Yonge and Eglinton, 1997. Photograph by Sorel Etrog. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161719). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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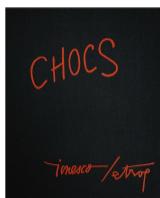


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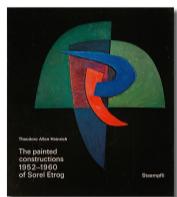
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Cover of *The Painted Constructions 1952-60 of Sorel Etrog* by Theodore Allen Heinrich (Berne: Switzerland: Staempfli et Cie Ltd. 1968). Courtesy of Staempfli et Cie Ltd. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Jonathan Gendler.



The Etrog family at their home in Rishon Le'tzion, Israel, c.1950s. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Zipora Gendler.



Guernica, 1937, by Pablo Picasso. Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid (DE00050). Photo credit: Museo Reina, Madrid.



Installation view of the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, 2020. Courtesy of Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.



Installation view of the Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto, 2020. Courtesy of Hennick Family Wellness Gallery at Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Toni Hafkenscheid.

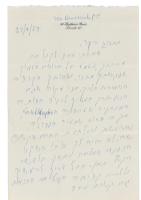


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Jewish residents of Iasi, Romania, were murdered in the streets in June 1941 after the start of the Second World War. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. (9036).



Letter that Ayala Zacks wrote to Sorel Etrog, 1959 (page one of two). Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161718).



Lime spatula (kena), twentieth century. Brooklyn Museum Collection, gift of the Ernest Erickson Foundation, Inc. (86.224.147). Courtesy of Brooklyn Museum.



Mary Pratt holding a 1989 Genie award in Ottawa, Ontario. Courtesy of Mount Allison University Archives, Mary Pratt fonds (2003.35/8/4). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Maternal grandmother Feigi with Sorel Etrog, 1933. Courtesy of Zipora Gandler.



Moshe, Lika, Tony, and Sorel Etrog during a visit to Venice, Italy, c.1970s. Courtesy of Zipora Gandler.



Moses, c.1513-15, by Michelangelo. San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome (Italy). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Photo credit: Jörg Bittner Unna.



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Mother and Child, 1960–62, in Venice, Italy, 1966. Library and Archives of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Poster of *Un chien andalou* for CBC television.



Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Sorel Etrog with *Dream Chamber*, 24 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, 1983. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Romanian police walk past the bodies of Jews removed from the Iasi-Calarasi death train in Targu-Frumos, July 1, 1941. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. (27430).



Romanian soldiers and a cadet arrest a group of Jews at 157 I.C. Bratianu Street during the Iasi pogrom, June 29, 1941. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives, Washington, D.C. (74093).



Sea form (Porthmeor), 1958, by Barbara Hepworth. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks, 1970 (71/187). © Bowness (2020).



Sorel Etrog, late 1950s. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog and John Cage for *Musicage* (installation view) for John Cage's seventieth birthday, 1982. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Robin Knight.



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Sorel Etrog and Pierre Matisse at the opening of Etrog exhibition at Matisse Gallery, 1965. Photograph by Fred Stein. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog.



Sorel Etrog and Samuel Beckett signing *Imagination Dead Imagine*, 1982, in Beckett's Paris studio. Photograph by Michael Nguyen. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog.



Sorel Etrog at the Zacks' Southampton Wood Workshop, 1959. Photograph by L. Brown. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog carving *Waterbury* in his Manhattan studio, 1961. Photograph by Leslie Shurgin. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog exhibition at Gallery Moos, Toronto, 1959. Reproduced from *Sorel Etrog: Five Decades* by Ihor Holubizky (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2013). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020). Photo credit: Anthony Hayman.



Sorel Etrog's first solo exhibition, ZOA House, Tel Aviv, Israel, 1958. Photograph by Yahin Hirsh. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161734). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog in his studio, early 1970s. Photograph by Aurelio Amendola. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Sorel Etrog in his Tip Top Tailors studio, Toronto, 1964. Photograph by Paul Smith. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161727). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog in his Yonge and Eglinton studio with studies for the Sun Life project, 1981-83. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog in Michelucci Foundry, Pistoia, Italy, c.1973. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog installing *Capriccio*, 1961-64, at Walter Moos Gallery, 1964, photograph by Paul Smith. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161723). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel with Ayala and Samuel J. Zacks at Etrog's first Canadian one-man show at Gallery Moos, Toronto, 1959. Photograph by Anthony Hayman. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog with *The Bodifestation of the Kite*, 1984, at Grunwald Gallery, Toronto, 1984. Photograph by Paul Smith. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog, 2014 (LA.161724). © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel Etrog with *Complexes of a Young Lady*, c.1962. Courtesy of Zipora Gendler. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



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Sorel Etrog with *Moses*, 1963–65, at Expo 67, Montreal. Sorel Etrog Fonds, Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, gift of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Sorel with parents Tony and Morit, c.1936. Courtesy of Zipora Gendler.



Sorel Etrog working on plaster of *Embrace*, 1961–64, early 1960s. Photograph by Paul Smith. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Stages of production for *Sadko*, 1971–72, from preliminary wax model through construction in plaster, to final plaster version before casting, c.1972. Photographs by Aurelio Amendola. Courtesy of The Estate of Sorel Etrog. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



La Tauromaquia, Plate No. 19: "Otra locura suya en la misma plaza" ("Another Madness of His in the Same Ring"), 1816, by Francisco Goya. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (1943.3.1638). Photo credit: National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Still from Walter Moos on Sorel Etrog, c.2013. Courtesy Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. © The Estate of Sorel Etrog (2020).



Samuel J. Zacks's collection. Photograph by Walter Curtin. From the article "The Four fabulous Lives of Samuel Zacks," published in *Maclean's*, April 23, 1960. Courtesy of *Maclean's*. © The Estate of Walter Curtin (2020).



Unique Forms of Continuity in Space, 1913, by Umberto Boccioni. Museum of Modern Art, New York, acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest by exchange (231.1948). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



Zipora and Sorel in front of family store in Israel, c.1952. Courtesy of Zipora Gandler.

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