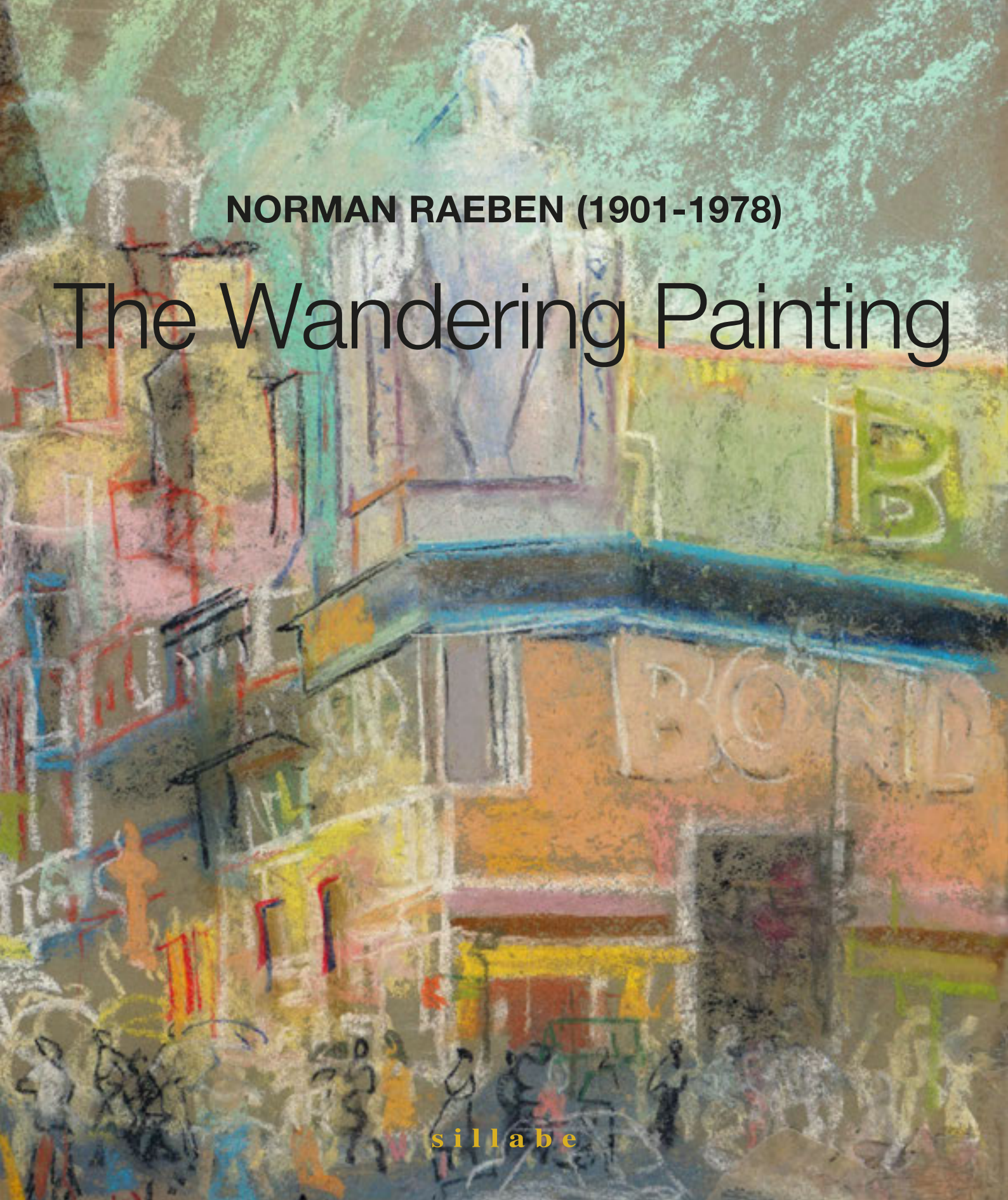
NORMAN RAEBEN (1901-1978)
The Wandering Painting
sillabe

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pages 6-7: Norman Raeben's Carnegie Hall Studio. Courtesy of Carnegie Hall Rose Archives

Raeben's works of art courtesy of Josh Raeben.
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The Wandering Painting

edited by Fabio Fantuzzi

s i l l a b e

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Venice Jewish Museum | Ikona | Lab space | Azzime
November 24, 2024 – January 14, 2025

Exhibition

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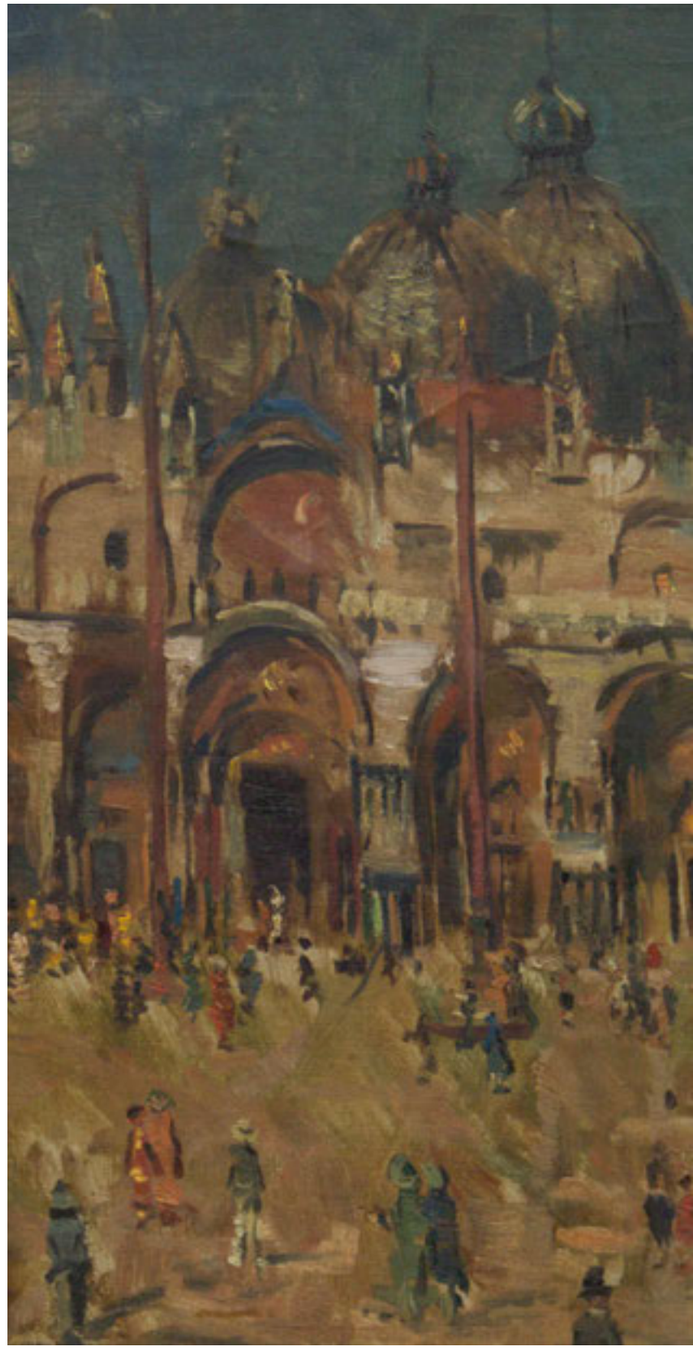
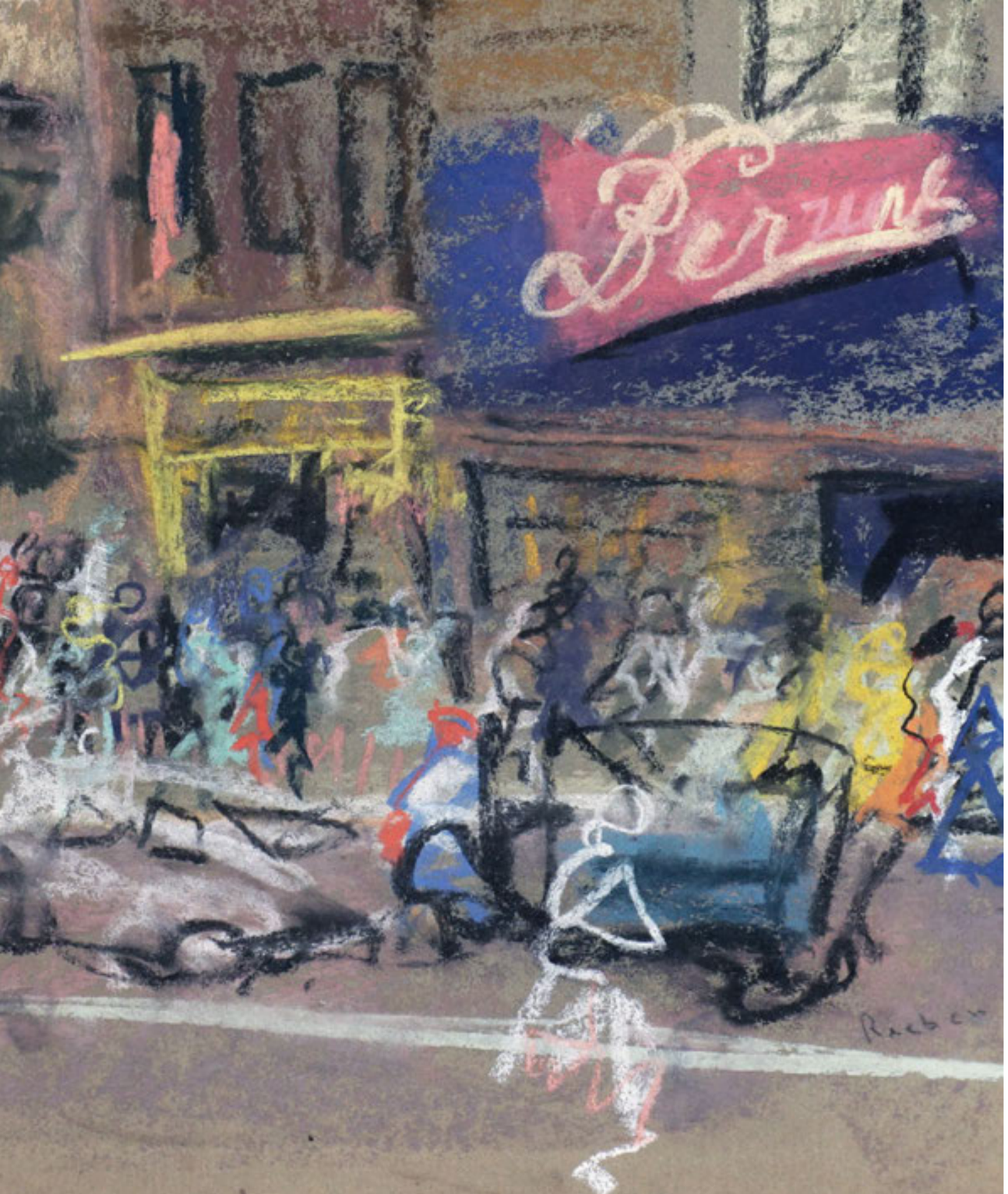
Contents

The Ghetto of Venice Speaks Yiddish Again

Yiddish culture returns to the Venice Ghetto, linking a shred of its history with the previously undiscovered painting of Norman Raeben. Diasporas in contact.
Norman Raeben, born Numa Rabinovich, was the youngest son of Solomon Rabinovich/Rabinovitz, alias Sholem Aleichem, one of the three greatest representatives of Yiddish literature between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, together with Mendele Mocher Sforim and Isaac Leib Peretz.
The Yiddish language arrived in Venice as early as the end of the fourteenth century, brought by Ashkenazi Jews who, accused of being the anointers behind the Black Death, had saved themselves from the pogroms in the Rhine Valley.
Evidence of the presence of Yiddish in Venice, and in the Ghetto, remains in the writings of Elia Levita (Eliyahu Bachur or Eliyahu ha-Lewi Ashkenazi) and Gumprecht from Szczrebrszyn (Shebreshin). Eliyahu Levita, an influential linguist and grammarian, alongside his scholarly works, composed in Yiddish a chivalric romance (the *Bovo Buch*) and satirical poems including *Di sreyfe fun Venedig* / *The Great Fire of Venice*, in which he describes in satirical accents the frightful fire that broke out in 1514 in a large area adjacent to the Rialto Bridge. Gumprecht, on the other hand, a Polish-born *melamed* (preceptor) in Venice, composed a *Purimshpil*—a humorous operetta retelling the story of the biblical book of Esther. The work, which dates back to the mid-sixteenth century, was written on the occasion of Purim, and is the first attestation of the term *Purimshpil*. In Yiddish, Gumprecht also wrote an operetta on the feast of Chanukkah.
In Venice, the Yiddish language probably lasted little more than a century, no longer 'useful' in an environment that was pushing towards a rapid and necessary linguistic unification—although certainly not a unified identity. Yiddish was, in fact, in close, conflicting contact with different realities—the Italian and the Sephardic, both Hispanic-Portuguese and Levantine, on the one hand, and that of the surrounding non-Jewish environment, on the other. Each reality with its own proper language. The Ashkenazi tradition, however, lasted a few more centuries, albeit orphaned of its peculiar linguistic expression, sadly ousted by the prevalence of the Sephardic tradition.
Every exile brings with it nostalgia and loss.
Five centuries later, a bright splash of Yiddish culture reappears in the Venice Ghetto with the painting of Norman Raeben, son of a champion of Yiddish literature, and son, like his father, of exile. Not the diaspora from the Rhine Valley, this time, but from the Russian Empire, from which the Jews emigrated following the pogroms of Kishinev (1903) and Kiev and Odessa (1905) and another sixty or so cities— not even the last pogroms in the long series of massacres that followed throughout the nineteenth century. Sholem Aleichem left Russia in 1906, moving first to New York and then rejoining his family in Geneva. Wandering Jews, like the more than two million other Jews fleeing the Russian massacres.
Different countries of Europe, same massacres.
A son of Sholem Aleichem's, tied like him to the Yiddish language and culture, Norman could not help but share his father's feeling of exile. All of Sholem Aleichem's narrative is diasporic literature, imbued with the feeling of nostalgia and bitterness that the diasporic experience transmitted to him. The author of *Tevye the Milkman*, *The Adventures of Mottel the Singer's Son*, and the *Kasrilevke* stories, successfully revisited for the theatre and cinema (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Sholem Aleichem, disillusioned as he was by all ideologies, created figures of the defeated and dispossessed who are confronted with the fate of mediocrity, poverty, abuse, and more or less voluntary exile. In an attempt, as desperate as it is fatalistic, to resist the loss of identity, memory and tradition. What makes the faith in survival possible is the ironic, bitterly ironic look with which the events of existence are lived and narrated. The fate of life is accompanied and made 'liveable' by a smile and by sheer resignation. Fate is always behind us, already known and inescapable. Even the Promised Land one expects to find in the New World, however much fame it may bring, cannot help but bring with it the gift of disappointment and regret.
Norman Raeben inherits from his father the feeling of exile, and also the sense of humour that leads him to caricature reality, especially when portraying human figures. The alternative is a sketched humanity, vaguely outlined, unrecognisable; figures without a body and without a face, people without an identity. People who are not persons. As if they had no possibility of life, no present and no future. One wonders if they ever had a past and, if so, if they would be currently able to recognise it. Or whether they are not trying to escape that past. And, ironically, the environment in which Norman Raeben moves continues to be that of the *shtetl*, made up of Jewish intellectuals and Yiddish culture.
It is dramatic and paradoxical that in order to be discovered and acknowledged in death, Norman Raeben, Master of Artists and Masters, who was in contact with Chagall, Soutine and Matisse, has to re-emerge in Venice rather than in 'his' New York.
The Ghetto of Venice welcomes him with joy and enthusiasm, thus regaining, for a fleeting moment, the glory of its Yiddish past.

Dario Calimani
President of the Jewish Community of Venice





Introduction

Fabio Fantuzzi

In some rare cases, scholars happen to come across remarkable figures who eluded the attention of critics and escaped the watchful eye of academia. More often than not, they are artists who have failed to find their place in the dynamics of the contemporary art world and have not fit in its trends, usually due to a lack of ability to promote their art or a shortage of connections and collaborations. Norman Raeben is one of them, and this is the first catalogue of his works. His case may seem even more singular and perhaps somewhat paradoxical than that of others who shared the same doom of being reassessed posthumously. While the shortage of advertisements about his teaching activity and limited number of exhibitions attest to his poor promoting abilities, his connections with and influence on prominent artists are long known. This is true to such an extent that his name is mentioned in dozens of books, essays, articles, and blogs—especially in connection to his father, the famous Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem—as well as his influence on Bob Dylan, who attended his studio in the spring of 1974. Some enthusiastic statements shared by Dylan in various interviews, particularly in the late 1970s, created an air of interest and mystery around Norman Raeben. A decade after the artist's death, a short article by Bert Cartwright titled *The Mysterious Norman Raeben*[1] further contributed to the rise in interest in the world of Dylan studies, turning this mystery into an over thirty-year-long debate on the nature of his art and relevance of his influence. Despite this curiosity, up until recently, due to the almost complete unavailability of Raeben's materials, writings and works of art, as well as details about his career, the information offered in the literature on the subject was scarce and defective.

In more recent years, two milestone studies on Dylan, *La voce di Bob Dylan. Un racconto dell'America* (2001) by Alessandro Carrera[2] and *Bob Dylan in America* (2010) by Sean Wilentz[3], provided some crucial information on Raeben, which was further enriched by student Carolyn Schlam in the book *The Creative Path* (2018).[4] Inspired by these contributions, the curator carried out a doctoral project on Raeben and Dylan, whose initial results were first presented at the international conference "Bob Dylan and the Arts. Masked and Anonymous: The Many Facets of the Art of Bob Dylan," organized by Università degli Studi Roma Tre in 2018, and later included in the doctoral thesis *"All the Way from New Orleans to* New *Jerusalem": Norman Raeben e Bob Dylan* (2020)[5] and the section *Art* of the book *Bob Dylan and the Arts: Songs, Film, Painting, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe* (2020).[6]

These studies revealed a sophisticated artist and an erudite, influential teacher whose long career spanned across some of the most influential 20th-century American and European artistic movements and cultural milieus. However, still limited information was available on his painting career and collaborations, particularly about his works of art, which were all privately owned and had, for the most part, yet to be retraced, edited, and published. Filling in this lack of materials and studies on his impact on the New York art scene were two main objectives of the EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie project POYESIS. The project analyzed Raeben's career and his artistic collaborations as a case study to deepen the knowledge of the evolution of Ukrainian Yiddish-derived culture and art in New York in the 20th century. Mostly conducted in the United States at the Columbia University's Department of Germanic Languages, the fieldwork entailed researching several archives, including the Smithsonian Libraries, The Carnegie Hall Susan W. Rose Archives, the YIVO, the Art Students League, the Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Stanford Libraries, and the Bob Dylan Center. The most substantial part of the research, however, consisted in examining private collections belonging to the artist's students, collaborators, and relatives. The study of these

archives uncovered a wide range of information about his life, career, and collaborations; it also unearthed a corpus of unpublished materials, including letters and documents, videos and audios of his lessons, various lectures, excerpts of an unfinished book on art history, and an extensive collection of his paintings. This catalogue enriches our knowledge of Raeben's art by presenting a variety of essays based on these never-before-studied materials and by offering biographical notes and a compendium of his works for the first time. It brings together contributions from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, reflecting the distinctly transatlantic approach that characterized Raeben's art.

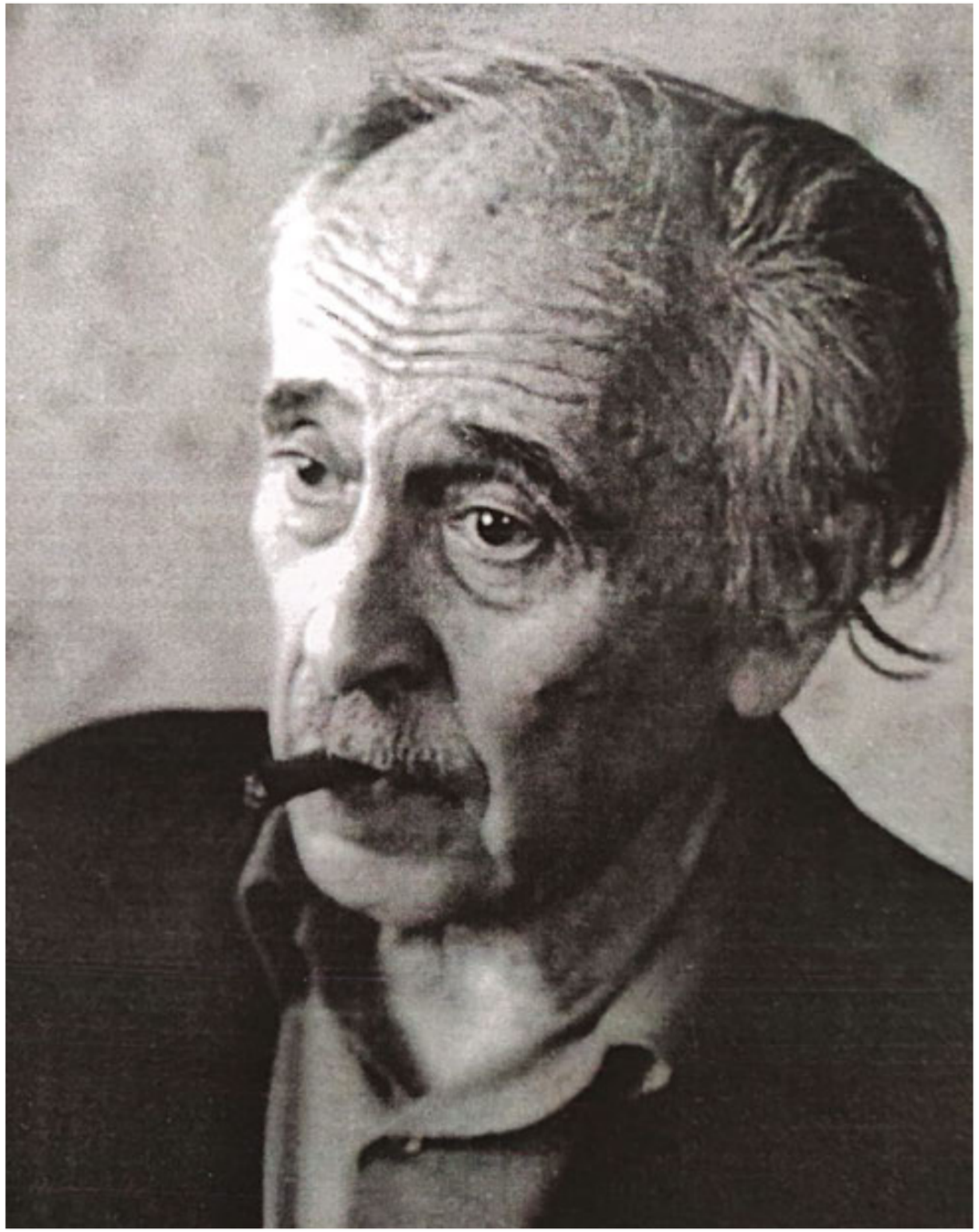
Born in Kyiv in 1901, Raeben was educated in various parts of Europe before emigrating to the United States in 1914. There, he joined the flourishing Jewish artistic milieu of New York City and studied with exponents of the American realist movement of the Ashcan School, being influenced especially by Robert Henri, John Sloan, George Luks, and Max Weber. These first collaborations led to a full-time painting career in the 1920s and 1930s, marked by long journeys in North Africa and Europe, where he refined his style, complementing his early realist approach with influences derived from the European tradition and especially the School of Paris. While the artistic languages of the Old Continent had a major impact on his art, New York always exerted a unique attraction. In a 1931 interview, he spoke of his dream of having a studio with large windows on the 100th floor of a New York skyscraper to paint a few more inches of the view of downtown New York every day, capturing the turbulent pace of its life. The chaotic vitality and incessant movement of the city, with its chromatic and formal characteristics, are the ciphers of his major cityscape cycles, which often represent the city's most emblematic places, such as Times Square, Central Park, Broadway, automats, old subway entrances or buildings with a towering and iconic form such as the Flatiron Building. The theme of travel and this deep fascination for modern metropolises are among the trademarks of the work of an artist of both the old and new worlds.

It is, in fact, the relationship between these two foci of Raeben's—travel and metropolis—that illuminates more than anything else his artistic evolution and the relevance of his contribution to the art world. His early paintings attest to roots in American realism and, in particular, show the influence of John Sloan, George Bellows, and Robert Henri's city scenes. Raeben inherited from them the interest in the chaotic vitality of metropolises and what Rebecca Zurrier defined as the "mobile observer" approach of the ashcanners:[7] he captured city scenes and landscapes working *en* plain air and on the move, trying to grasp the fleeting quality of the scenes almost as if his paintings were glimpses or 'shots'. In the works he made in the 1930s after his Parisian periods, he retained this wandering attitude, but he combined it with the languages of the Paris School, achieving highly autonomous results. This commingling of languages, themes, and approaches of the Old and New Continents is the highest point of his creative research and his most important and unique contribution: in these works, he reached the apex of his poetics, finding a synthesis between fidelity to the visual context on the one hand and autonomy of sign and color on the other.

Raeben's artistic journey culminated in his role as a prominent art teacher and lecturer after World War II. In 1946, he opened a studio at Carnegie Hall, fulfilling his dreams of having a studio in Midtown, New York. On the 11th floor of Carnegie Hall Tower, surrounded by hundreds of studios of artists, actors, musicians, and singers, he devoted himself primarily to teaching in a cultural environment teeming with creativity until the day he died on December 12, 1978, while keeping alive his relationship with the Old Continent painting tradition through several more visits to France and Israel.

The first retrospective exhibition of his works, titled "Norman Raeben (1901-1978): The Wandering Painting" (Jewish Museum in Venice, November 24, 2024 – January 14, 2025), narrates his career and relationships intertwining the themes of travel and the dialogue between cultures and artistic traditions. Raeben himself evoked this entwinement with his artistic choices: rhythm, colors and style, in fact, emphasize how most of his works were made 'on the road'. Moreover, starting from the mid-1930s, Raeben stopped giving titles to cityscapes and intentionally did not provide indications, dates, or progressive numbering, forcing the viewer into a journey, both real and ideal, among and within the works in a circular path with no beginning and no end.

The journey thus becomes the very substance of the artistic process as both subject and method. Such transposition of a wandering approach, rooted within traditional Jewish and American culture, into painting foreshadowed the incoming cultural zeitgeist that shortly thereafter would mark the essence of 1950s and 1960s Americanism. This exhibition embraces this ideal by taking visitors through the places that defined



Norman Raeben's career: from Kyiv to both New York and Paris, the two main poles of attraction in his career. Each of these metropolises and the cities he traveled through on his long, artistic path left a unique mark on his development: an impact of different cultures and traditions manifest in both his works and teachings, as well as in the network of intellectuals that he influenced with his ideas and innovative style.

The catalogue, in turn, offers itineraries through places and stages of Raeben's creative and theoretical evolution, traversing some of the most significant artistic scenes of the twentieth century. Andrea Pappas places Raeben's artistic experience within the context of American art. She takes the reader into the New York art environment between the two great wars, delving into his relationships with the Ashcan School of Painting movement, the galleries and art market of that time, and the circles of New York's Yiddish culture. Pappas explains, however, that Raeben's work cannot be outlined drawing only from his time in America. His style and career place him in the groove of the burgeoning trans-Atlantic exchange that characterized that period, which Raeben embraced and interpreted fusing "modern subject matter, particularly depictions of the city, with the freedom of color and atmosphere drawn from the Impressionists and Postimpressionists." "His drawings," Pappas further explains, are notable "for their high-key color, a legacy of turn-of-the-century modern art in general and the Fauve group around Henri Matisse in particular." Rich in musicality and colors, his semi-abstract pastels convey a profound sense of spontaneity that pervades his works on paper, capturing fleeting street views that "seem to thrum with city sounds." Therefore, these trademarks place his work in the context of what Pappas defines as mid-garde Modernism. Along with other artists of this movement, Raeben sought a third way to merge tradition and modernity: an exploration that aims to carry forward the discipline and innovate its means of expression, at the same time attentive to render its content understandable. Or, to borrow a term dear to Raeben, to make it perceptible to every spectator and not only to the circles of the cultural elites.

However, the story that Pappas retraced based on unpublished materials and ground research portrays the image of a painter detached from the commercial circles, political involvement, and mainstream culture of his time. Such a condition of otherness is reflected into his works, which "put the viewer at a substantial distance from the scene. The small size of the pedestrians strung across the foreground further separates them from the viewer, situating us as an observer, rather than participant, in the scene." Like their creator, these are wandering figures that traverse modernity with the distant eyes of the other. As Pappas states, "For all their energy and color, his works convey social detachment: figures are not identifiable beyond their gender, and they register as a crowd, not as a series of individuals. They remain part of the overall image, rather than the city becoming a backdrop for the figures."

Stefania Portinari takes the reader to Paris, unfolding the influences that helped Raeben develop his mature style. It is a journey through the streets of Montmartre, where the artist found in the Jewish avant-garde circles a "safe point of reference, a supportive and welcoming group that already knew of his father's reputation." We learn about his direct contacts with artists of the caliber of Chaïm Soutine, Jules Pascin, and Marc Chagall, who, years later, asked Raeben's sister, Marie Waife-Goldberg, to serve as a liaison for contacts with American galleries and magazines on Chagall's behalf, highlighting the relevance of their common Yiddish cultural background. His mid-1920s Parisian period allowed him to see first-hand an "established canon of art" and to feel tangibly the artistic legacy of impressionists, post-impressionists, and modernists like Camille Pissarro, Cézanne, Maurice Utrillo, Matisse, and Soutine, whose lessons, according to Portinari, Raeben filtered through the knowledge of the ashcanners' teachings, particularly of Robert Henri. It was, however, his second stay in the early 1930s that shaped Raeben's more mature artistic language. This artistic turning point found expression in rapid and light handling offered by the media of pastels and sandpaper, which lend themselves well to an itinerant approach and a swift, musical style. His wandering through the streets of Paris then was, more than anything else, an opportunity for artistic renewal, a desire to detach himself from the highly traditional styles of his first mentors, resulting, as Portinari explains, in "a visual update with 'pleasant' tones, which can be seen in various cityscapes" teeming with Parisian "typical places of socializing and entertainment, people in cafés, fashionable passersby, in acidic and pastel colors, yet drawn in a seismographic and symphonic style, rendered with barely sketched strokes like visual notes, though rich in irony and festivity." Raeben learned to master "a type of post-Impressionism with a quick, graceful touch that leaned towards Expressionism," revealing a fascination for the Fauves and Matisse's liberating explorations, vibrant and unnatural use of color, and apparent carefreeness, and for the works of artists like Maurice Utrillo or Marcel Dufy for the "whispers of small human silhouettes" in his cityscapes. Based on these trademarks and his artistic connections, one would be tempted to situate his works in the framework of the École de Paris, particularly with soft tonalism. However, as Portinari observes, Raeben was not a part of this group and did not feature in their collective exhibitions. Like Pappas's analysis, this essay presents Norman Raeben as an outsider. His works also seem to transcend these classifications because "if the artist can be interpreted in a post-Impressionist sensitivity […], he has also moved beyond it, into a kind of 'delicate' expressionism" that views the work of art as an expression of a sensation experienced. Like the silhouetted figures of his cityscapes, his art embodied the paradigm of otherness and wandering because "in a world where technique was disintegrating," Raeben was "in search of capturing modernity."

Nico Stringa's essay analyzes how Raeben merged the influences he gathered on the two sides of the ocean. Stringa journeys through the stages of the artist's pictorial evolution, creating an itinerary within the paintings. His path *per exempla* takes the lead from *Venice* (1920s), a post-impressionist landscape that places Raeben "at the level of many distinguished painters of the late 1800s, from Walter Sickert to Maurice B. Prendergast—not to mention those American painters who had helped shape him." We come to learn that Raeben began to abandon 'touch' painting after his first Parisian period, looking for a more modern approach in landscapes and depictions of Provincetown, Maine, and Long Island. According to Stringa, the turning point was his understanding of Paul Cézanne's role, whose research allowed him to distance himself from fully figurative representation. Stringa then moves to Raeben's time in Paris and New York, walking the reader through "the 'cinema' of urban life, the ribbon of houses that seem to move in their vivid colors and almost transparent structures" and the "roads filled with people in motion, rich in local color, and buildings overlapping and captured in quick succession, observed by an amused and unprejudiced eye." With his fleeting, almost cinematic, attention to the two metropolises, "Raeben manages to replace the picturesque with an anti-picturesque, which, in turn, has an extremely pictorial character" that unfolded through "the use of pastels, which allowed the artist to 'speak' a slang understandable to everyone, to 'play' a lively and universally appreciable jazz."

A profound reflection on identity and displacement also emerges from this analysis. Stringa portrays the artist as a figure of otherness, "an American in Paris, European in New York," noticing that "the role of human figures is entirely secondary—not only from a quantitative standpoint but, more importantly, from the perspective of their compositional value." He warns us, however, that this movement "should not be interpreted in a modernist tone but, rather, as a highly original and profound reinterpretation of the relationship between Cézanne and Cubism." Starting from the Cubist and abstract revolutions, which he observed from a distance, Raeben "identified a third path" developing a specific pictorial language of his own: an "unexpected metropolitan magical realism."

The following essay proves that even Raeben's portraits tell a story of wandering that offers insights into New York's artistic circles, often tied to the Eastern Europe Yiddish diaspora. A story that starts in what is now Ukraine and ends in New York, whose beginning part is recounted by Sholem Aleichem in his last unfinished novel, *Mottl. The Adventure of the Cantor's Son*.[8] To create the character, Sholem Aleichem took inspiration from his youngest son, Norman Raeben, and his own emigration experience from Kyiv to New York. However, afflicted by tuberculosis, he could not finish the second part of the novel, leaving a blank page for his son to complete the story of a character so much like himself.

Raeben's portraits complete this final, unfinished page and bring the viewer into the lesser-known New York cultural milieus. Thanks to the connections made by his father, Raeben grew immersed in literary and theatrical circles, perhaps even more so than the artistic ones, as the relevance and nature of his collaborations and the breadth and richness of his lessons attest. Far from being limited to art history and painting, his lectures and ideas were wide-ranging and encompassed various disciplines, putting philosophy, music, literature, theater, Jewish culture, and visual arts in dialogue. He used to tell his students he learned how to paint like realists and impressionists by reading Chekhov and Proust. It is unsurprising, then, that this unique, multidisciplinary approach to art had a substantial impact on several prominent artists who had notable careers in other fields. Among his portraits, there are exponents of the Yiddish Theater, like

Luba Harrington and Miriam Kressyn, Broadway artists and opera singers such as Alexandra Danilova, Dorothy Bird, and Seymour Osborne, who mentored Broadway stars like George Rose, William Daniels, Fred Gwynne, John Cullum and many others. The list of his students also comprises notable musicians such as Bob Haggart, Jimmy Randal, and Steve Postels, among others, as well as many famous actresses. Raeben also taught and painted various members of the Adler family, including Mary, Pearl Pearson, Diana, Allen, and the more famous Stella, who, as part of the famous Group Theater, introduced the Stanislavski method in the United States, revolutionizing the history of contemporary American theater. Most of these intellectuals have a common Eastern European Yiddish cultural heritage, which Bob Dylan, the last of his famous students, also shared.

The essay's path comes to an end, unveiling how the songwriter translated Raeben's ideas on time and human subjects' representation. In his mid-1970s albums, Dylan sought to break down narrative temporality and linearity through the experimental use of personal pronouns, portraying his characters like the evanescent human figures of Raeben's cityscapes. Doomed to a ceaseless existential journey with no beginning and no end, the protagonists of the narrative songs on these albums are also depicted as fleeting presences rapidly sketched as pure vibrations, as voices in constantly open and evolving works of art.

This exploration concludes by bringing the reader into the artist's studio with two essays. Firstly, New York artist Roz Jacobs, a pupil of Raeben, recreates the atmosphere of the atelier and shares a vivid and personal picture of the teacher. Reading these pages feels like seeing him paint as he dissects philosophy and literature while dropping quotations from Tolstoy, Braque, Freud, or Einstein. We see an artist at work who can create bridges and links between distant universes and make them communicate with each other on a page that becomes a lively cosmos. His was a school of life, not just painting, a philosophical school whose mentor's first and primary aim was teaching his pupils to see in the most profound meaning of the term: to "visualize and make tangible with all of your senses what is before you—unwrapping the symbol to experience what is." In Raeben's words, "The eye touches as it looks." Reading these pages, one may think about Bob Dylan's memories of the artist, who, he said, "taught me how to see. He put my mind and my hand and my eye together in a way that allowed me to do consciously what I unconsciously felt."

This portrait shows that the teacher and artist were two faces of the same coin. Uninterested in the commercial aspects of art, Raeben taught a semi-abstract language that aimed to discover the world on the canvas like his major works, which he never wanted to show his students. Jacobs recounts that he "spoke of a kind of hide and seek between the material and the immaterial, between the real and the spiritual to achieve a complete or aesthetic experience." A lesson that students would learn from him daily: "As his student, I learned how to "enter" the page as if it were infinite in space and time. I didn't feel like I was drawing on top of a piece of paper. Instead, I had the sense that the paper was space and while I was drawing, the subject would arrive out of that space. It was not paper. It was a universe that was alive—and full of darkness and light, wonder and possibilities."

Secondly, Antonella Martinato points a magnifying glass to the artist's techniques and media. Her detailed overview accounts for the conservation needs of these itinerant paintings and the challenges required to restore these works so that they can fully tell their wandering stories and continue to do so in the future. In doing so, the restorer also offers fascinating insights into the painter's style and painting choices. Her analysis of the sandpaper chosen by the artist initially from rolls of paper sold for sharpening knives is most eye-opening. Raeben found the ideal medium for his pastels in this coarse-grained, densely textured sandpaper, which he cut hastily, obtaining a shape similar to that of ancient parchment. Easily transportable, such a medium with its rough surface allowed him to capture the fleeting quality of modern life in a vivid and richly colorful way.

The last section, *Paintings and Drawings*, also takes the form of a journey. The progression, as much as possible, chronicles the stages of Raeben's artistic evolution, grouping the works by technique and subject in order to offer a complete chronological overview of the many directions of his painting.

The last section, *Studio Works*, which are creations of a different nature, deserves notable mention. They are mostly demonstration works Raeben painted in his studio to performatively exemplify the day's lesson to his students, usually in just a few minutes. The section is particularly revealing because it opens a window into the artist's creative process, offering glimpses into his teachings and allowing a deeper understanding of the artist's

stylistic choices and pictorial theories. An ingenious and rhapsodic teacher, Raeben constantly invented new exercises and strategies to force his students to focus on sensory perception of the subject and cast aside the mind's rationalizing will. One of them was the "head study," which Raeben would have his students paint with only a few colors, often just black and white, from underexposed and upside-down images, thus forcing them to capture the movements of light and shadow instead of trying to draw the subject. Another fascinating aspect is what the artist used to call "the abstract," a perceptive pictorial background that serves as a springboard for creation. Raeben, in fact, conceived the creative process as a hermeneutic of perception. As he explained in the lecture *The Metaphor*, "there is feeling that comes from your senses and feeling that comes from your mind, which we call imagination. And you find that there is a contradiction. If you understand them, instead of a contradiction, you will find a paradox, which is known in literature as the metaphor; and that, of course, is beauty. Our desire for the metaphor shows us what it is we really want from art." For this reason, he believed creating an abstract pictorial context was necessary to translate the pure, unmediated perception that the subject engenders in the painter. The only objective link to the real, the abstract background provides the springboard for creation: the atmosphere in which the subject can breathe and come alive.

Moreover, during the lessons, Raeben used to walk around the studio through the easels and analyze the students' works. He would not only give advice and direction: when he found a student struggling with some significant pictorial aspect that he had difficulty grasping and translating onto canvas, Raeben would take the brush from his hand and paint over the unfortunate victim of the day's work with a few quick strokes to make the concept clear and visible. Though they were not meant to be considered as finished works intended for exhibition, given the relevance of his teachings and the importance of the artists he influenced, the catalogue gathers a couple of these examples in the final part of this section.

Each from a different perspective, all these wide-ranging contributions portray Raeben as a liminal figure placing his oeuvre in the context of the phenomenon of the "mid-garde." Like those of other painters who fall into this markedly heterogeneous category, instead of fully conforming with the trends and characteristics of the avant-garde movements that shaped his era, Raeben's works show an investment in bringing forward the artistic tradition to a more communal and comprehensible space. His artistic languages strive to find common ground between the realist lesson of the Ashcan School of Painting movement and the new expressiveness offered by the School of Paris, springing and thriving between the two artistic poles of New York and Paris. Thus, as Nico Stringa aptly states, he was indeed "an American in Paris and a European in New York:" incarnating the 'other' on both sides of the Atlantic, he was a wandering figure of an artist in his search for an artistic language "compatible to these two artistic traditions." Faithful to a conception of the creative process strictly intended as a means to bring forward the art of living by providing new means to feel and interpret the real and new ways to express them in paint, his works did not fit into an artistic context permeated by the conflicting languages of the avant-garde movements of his time. Such a conception and the world of wandering from which his art and career unfolded was thus left aside. Recreating it with its colors, music, style, and wandering stories is the purpose of this first catalogue of his works.

[1] B. Cartwright, "The Mysterious Norman Raeben," in J. Bauldie, *Wanted Man, In Search of Bob Dylan*, New York, 1991, pp. 85-90.
[2] A. Carrera, *La voce di Bob Dylan. Un racconto dell'America*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2011, pp. 296-310.
[3] S. Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, New York, 2011, pp. 137-139.
[4] C. Schlam, *The Creative Path. A View From the Studio On the Making Of Art*, New York, 2018.
[5] F. Fantuzzi, *"All the Way from New Orleans to* New *Jerusalem": Norman Raeben e Bob Dylan*, Ph.D. thesis, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, 2020.
[6] A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Paintings, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, pp. 191-232.
[7] R. Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2006, p. 86.
[8] Sholem Aleichem, *Adventures of Mottel the Cantor's Son*, translated by Tamara Kahana, New York, 1953.

Locating Norman Raeben in American Art

Andrea Pappas

Norman Raeben (b. Numa Rabinowitz, 1901-1978) is difficult to trace in the historical record of American Art. He exhibited only sporadically, by the end of his life was better known as a teacher, and much of his work has been lost. However, it is possible to place his career and his surviving work in the history of American modernism, particularly for the period between the two world wars. Raeben, like many aspiring Jewish American artists in New York, began by studying at the Educational Alliance's newly founded art school in 1918. He then moved on to the National Academy of Design, which he found to be too conservative in its approach to art.[1] However, he exhibited work there in 1924, a single painting. During 1918-1920 and again briefly in 1923, Raeben studied at the Art Students' League.[2] His teachers included John Sloan, Robert Henri, George Luks, and Max Weber, providing him with instruction in the modern, expressionist idiom of The Ashcan School, cubism, and other modern idioms. Raeben also experienced the new art firsthand when he and his wife traveled to Europe in 1925-1926 and returned to Paris in 1931-1933.[3] His education and travels typified that of many US artists in the first half of the twentieth century.[4]

Raeben and art institutions in New York

Except for his exhibition with the Society of Independent Artists in 1922, he does not seem to have participated in any of the artist groups that proliferated in the interwar years, particularly in the 1930s. Among these groups were The Ten (founded 1935), the American Abstract Artists' group (founded 1936), the American Artists' Congress (founded 1936), and Yiddisher Kultur Farband (YKUF) (founded 1937). Artists organizations might be organized around style, as was the American Abstract Artists (AAA), for example.[5] Group membership also might position an artist in terms of their politics and, in the case of the YKUF, linguistic heritage or ethnicity.[6] In contrast to the AAC and the YKUF, which had political as well as artistic goals, The Ten was ostensibly in pursuit only of public exposure in the form of exhibitions.[7] As was typical for these groups, the membership of The Ten overlapped that of other organizations: Louis Lozowick and Ben-Zion were members of the YKUF for example, and both the artists belonged to the AAC. Raeben's father, the writer Sholem Aleichem, figured prominently in Yiddish-American cultural circles, and Raeben likely encountered at least some of the YKUF artists in the context of both art exhibitions and his family's social life. Artist groups provided social support and helped their members promote their work, functioning as a kind of brand that dealers could market. Raeben, however, did not avail himself of this kind of networking for moral support and marketing.

In a brief posthumous chronology, the artist's son noted that "he was very poor at the business of art, of promoting himself."[8] Similarly, Raeben does not seem to have sought or obtained employment via the Federal Art Project (FAP) in the latter half of the 1930s. A part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the FAP was one of a handful of WPA projects that offered short-term employment for artists by paying them to make art; for example, painters had to turn in one painting per week to collect their check, other artists were employed to paint murals in public buildings. Raeben's absence from the rosters of these federal programs and from artists' groups was part of this lack of self-promotion. His extended time overseas in the 1920s and 1930s also likely created a hurdle to forging a long-term relationship with a dealer or gallery.

Still, Raeben did exhibit his work from time to time in the 1930s. The artist had his first solo exhibition in

1931, at the Jewish Club, where he showed portraits and landscapes. Later that year, his work featured in a one-person show at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association in Newark, New Jersey. Two more exhibitions followed in 1934. A group show, again at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association in Newark, included one work by Raeben, a landscape executed in pastel. The exhibition was notable not for the number of works by Raeben, but because it included prominent American and European Jewish artists, including Marc Chagall and Camille Pissarro; Raeben's former mentor, Max Weber; and Moses and Raphael Soyer.[9] In October of that year, the artist's work could be viewed in a solo show in the "rear gallery" at the Contemporary Arts Gallery on 54th Street in New York. There he exhibited landscapes in pastel.[10] Titles of art works mentioned in reviews include *The Elevated* and *East Ninth Street*, indicating that the exhibition included at least a few city views.[11]

Gallery closures throughout the Great Depression limited opportunities for artists. Gallerists did more than simply show artists' work; they arranged special viewings for regular buyers and collectors, and these sometimes came with price breaks or installment payments in order to secure repeat or multiple sales. The economic hardship of the Depression resulted in unstable or short-lived relationships between artists, dealers, and collectors (especially bread-and-butter collectors such as doctors and lawyers). Artists scrambled to show their work and experienced slow sales while gallerists tried to create new income streams to keep their doors open. For example, Christmas exhibitions filled with low-priced works on paper was one strategy. Raeben filled the income gap with teaching, and portrait commissions. Some teaching artists had jobs at educational institutions; Mark Rothko taught at the Brooklyn Jewish Center for nearly 16 years, for example. Raeben, however, held class in his studio. The more hours an artist spends teaching, the fewer they have for their own art production, and Raeben's son notes that over the years, teaching took up an increasingly large share of the artist's time.

Notably, his teaching career, Jewish social networks, and gallery entrepreneurship intersected in 1937 at the Guild Gallery.[12] Founded in 1935 by two artists, Anna Walinska (1906-1997) and Margaret Lefranc (1907-1998), the Guild did not bill itself as a "Jewish" venue but a substantial fraction of its artists were Jewish and it actively recruited Jewish patrons and clients.[13] We don't know how Raeben and Walinska met, but there are at least two possibilities. Walinska's father Ossip Walinsky, was well-known in Russian Jewish Circles (he was a labor leader) and he and Raeben's father likely at least knew of each other. The two artists may also have known each other either through their families or through their participation in Jewish social networks. Additionally, Walinska spent most of the 1920s in Paris, and may have made Raeben's acquaintance when he and his wife resided there.

As an effort to both support young artists and generate a new revenue stream, in the gallery's second season, Walinska made the smaller room off the main space available for student exhibitions for a fee. Ten of Raeben's students exhibited their work in pastel for two weeks in late January to early February of that year. A mention of a $15.00 payment from Raeben to the gallery appears in the correspondence file, and the fee must have been higher as there are two entries in the daybook referencing payments from him.[14] The gallery priced the student work at $25.00 each and may have made at least one sale, a work by "H. Roth." Raeben seems to have put more effort into promoting his students' work than his own.

Modernism

The year before Norman Raeben came to New York with his family, the New York artworld was rocked by the opening of a blockbuster exhibition in 1913.[15] The International Exhibition of Modern Art, or the Armory Show, as it has come to be known, packed the building with over 1,300 artworks, two thirds of them by Americans.[16] It also included modern works by European artists, most of them unfamiliar to American audiences. While some collectors enjoyed works by Delacroix, Ingres, and other major figures of the nineteenth century, most had not collected many works by either European or American avant-garde modernists—such as Matisse, Picasso, Mondrian, and Georgia O'Keeffe—if at all.[17] A limited market for avant-garde art meant few opportunities to see it in the galleries. Thus, prior to the Armory Show, the general public had enjoyed few opportunities to see the latest developments from abroad *en masse*. However, this would change when many American artists living in Europe began to return home at the advent of the first world war, and some of them brought first-hand experience with the European avant-garde with them. They infused New York and other large American cities with the look and spirit of the new art. Raeben's student years took place in this time of lively debates around the nature of art, what it should depict, and what it should look like. He fused modern subject matter, particularly depictions of the city, with the freedom of color and atmosphere drawn from the Impressionists and Postimpressionists.

Modernist art challenged viewers with its departure from long-familiar representational norms such as illusionist perspective, fidelity to surface appearances, and finely finished execution. Instead, modern art generally featured, to a greater or lesser degree, non-naturalistic handling of space, form, and color; it frequently employed expressionist features such as visible brushwork and simplified drawing; and sometimes veered into abstraction. Not everyone was pleased to see artists diverging from the visually legible classical and European traditions. Most famously, Marcel Duchamp's cubo-futurist painting of a woman descending a staircase encountered ridicule as "an explosion in a shingle factory."[18] However, many American artists benefited from the newly expanded parameters of what counted as art. The artist group calling themselves "The Eight" had already earned the label "Ashcan School" for its gritty and, often, expressionist depictions of how the "other half" lived, whether the laborers on the docks or sex workers in the streets.[19] In their rejection of "high art" subject matter such as Greco-Roman mythology, the Bible, and themes from history and highly esteemed literature, The Eight were thoroughly modern. The twenty-five years following the Armory Show saw a lively trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas, artworks, and artists, creating a vibrant period with many artists adopting and adapting modernist idioms. Raeben's travels to Paris and the Continent in the 1920s and 1930s placed him in that trans-Atlantic exchange, even if his work saw few exhibitions.

In the 1930s Raeben switched from oil paint to pastels because of the lower cost of the latter. Most of his surviving works are thus pastel drawings on paper. Like paint, pastels facilitated the artist's direct engagement with color and pastels also offer the elimination of the drying time required by oil and which can interrupt the creative process. More portable than oils and potentially bulky, wet canvases, pastels and paper offer a mobility that the process of setting up an easel, mixing wet paint, and then taking care of the wet canvas can impede. His extant oil paintings share the characteristic features of his pastels, but typically incorporate fewer passages of drawing; unlike a pastel crayon or pen, a paintbrush cannot sustain an extended line or contour as it quickly runs out of paint. The physical properties of pastels thus likely account, at least partially, for the sense of spontaneity that so thoroughly pervades Raeben's works on paper.

In terms of modernist style, his drawings are notable not for their fracturing of space but for their high-key color, a legacy of turn-of-the-century modern art in general and the Fauve group around Henri Matisse in particular, whom Raeben reportedly met on one of his trips to Europe. The extent of incorporation of avant-garde visual features with traditional elements in a work of art registers its place in the middle of a continuum. That continuum runs from the extreme avant-garde experiments through what I call the "mid-garde" to the academic investment in a stable, communal and legible tradition. In short, mid-garde modernism is the art that digests and reformulates the experiments of the avant-garde; translating them into forms that can be understood and appreciated by a wider audience.

Such translation happens through the incorporation of these experiments into pre-existing traditions, giving less adventurous or less informed audiences a better purchase on newer modern art. The traditional elements provide a bridge to understanding the experimental elements that mark mid-garde art works as modern. The common ground provided by tradition helps in recruiting and retaining an audience for modern art that goes beyond the cultural elite. Raeben's work falls along this continuum. His portraits necessarily land closer to the academic end of the spectrum; the conventional requirement for a portrait is that it recognizably resembles the sitter, limiting the liberties that the artist can take with form and color. His landscapes and cityscapes, however, venture closer to the middle; for example, the sketchy lines and rapid scumbles contribute to the expressionist feel of the works. Similarly, the artist's selective deployment of non-naturalistic color in the figures of the pedestrians (sometimes rendered in a single bright color) marks them as modernist in execution. Through his teaching as well as his own artistic production, Raeben participated in the passage from traditional to modern art.

Raeben's subject matter

Raeben did not date his pastel drawings, but Fabio Fantuzzi has placed them mostly in the 1930s and early 1940s, based on Raeben's exhibitions and when the kind of paper was manufactured. Additional internal evidence can help with dating the works; although sketchy, the more detailed automobiles mostly appear to be products of 1930s and 1940s design. However, one untitled work [Fig. 1] depicts a pink car in the foreground sporting what look like roof-edge "trumpet" lights, an icon of Citroen styling, first introduced in 1955.[20] Raeben's works exhibit the typical types of subject matter found in the work of many artists in New York in this period: street scenes and images of small towns or the countryside. Artists typically produced images of what they saw around them: landscapes, portraits, and genre pictures of people at the beach or park and Raeben's work is no exception. Unfortunately, only a narrow body of works survives from the first decades of his career; aside from a few portraits executed in oil (see pp. 63-67), most are the pastel drawings seen in this catalogue.[21]

Raeben's street scenes record daily life in the city. Broken color and gestural contours contribute to the sense of motion that animates the drawings. Drawing with color pastel, rather than making sketches in pencil or pen, directly channels the artist's eye for harmonies and tensions in the visual fabric of the city. For example, one of Raeben's untitled drawings [Fig. 2], features a street corner, rendered in two-point perspective, that places two-toned black and white building with its white upper story in the center of the paper. A mass of yellow cars in the lower left contrasts with the russet hues of the buildings above the autos. In turn, this is balanced at lower right by a cluster of turquoise blue tones. The delicate tracery of the wrought iron streetlights identifies them as New York City light posts now known as the "Type M," first installed in 1908.[22] The yellow automobiles likely reference the yellow taxicabs which

Fig. 1. Norman Raeben, B8.P9, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

became increasingly familiar to New York City dwellers in the 1920s.[23] The crowd of pedestrians at lower right mostly face left as they begin to cross the street, moving in the direction from which the traffic flows. The tension between the forward motions of the cars and pedestrians prompts the viewer to recall their own experience of the crosswalk with noisy traffic whizzing by. Raeben's street views seem to thrum with city sounds.

In depicting the city, Raeben was participating in modern tradition ranging from the Impressionists' views of their cities to the more recent interpretations of John Marin's cityscapes.[24] Marin's views of New York, which differ from the Ashcan School in their quasi-cubist style, piecing together fragmentary views to capture the dynamism of New York City and its new modern structures such as high-rise buildings and mass transit. Georgia O'Keeffe took yet another approach in her skyscraper paintings. Her images of skyscrapers provide abstracted views, sometimes from the street looking up, or sometimes the viewer is placed on an upper floor, looking across at another tall building.[25] Raeben's cityscapes usually put the viewer on the street, and he consistently employs long views which put the viewer at a substantial distance from the scene. The small size of the pedestrians strung across the foreground further separates them from viewer, situating us as an observer, rather than participant, in the scene.

In common with many modern works, Raeben's art eschews overt narrative. Compared to the academy tradition, a diminished presence of traditional literary narrative, or even its complete lack, is a major feature of much modern art. Raeben's work does this partly through the semi-abstraction of the images, and partly in its consistent adoption of a distant point of view. This runs counter to the work of many artists of the period, including better-known modern Jewish artists, such as Rafael Soyer, Theresa Bernstein, and Joseph Solman. These and other artists, including "Tenth Street School"

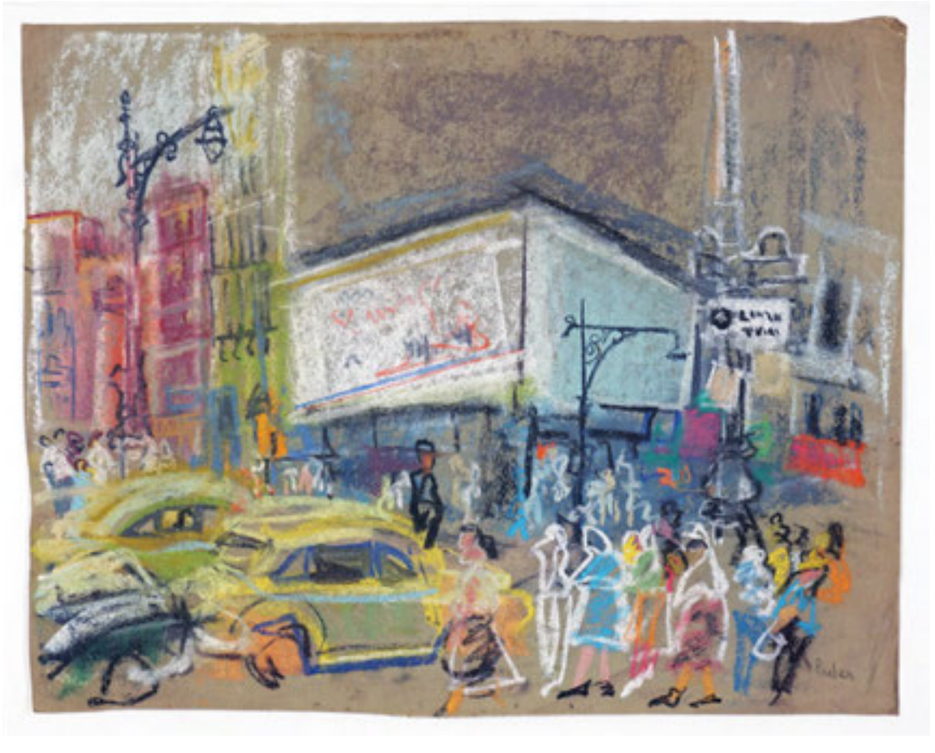


Fig. 2. Norman Raeben, 8.18, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

members Isabel Bishop and Kenneth Hayes Miller, often situate the viewer in a shared physical space with their subjects: at the table in the bus, on the sidewalk. This compositional strategy puts the viewer in the same social space as the depicted persons, registering their gender, class, race, age, and—perhaps—their ethnicity, occupation, and emotional state. Works by these artists invite us to notice our fellow urban dwellers.

For example, Theresa Bernstein's *In the Elevated* (1916) places us seated on a bench in the elevated train, within arm's length of a fellow passenger and, sometimes, invited to interact with them. Raphael Soyer's *In the City Park* (c. 1934), places us right next to a city bench crowded with four exhausted-looking men. Their inactivity markedly contrasts with the purposeful figures which occupy the middle ground; these seated men number among the unemployed. Because Soyer has put us next to the bench, the viewer could either be in similar circumstances (or at least asked to sympathize) or we could be passing by, on our way somewhere, as are the other figures who walk away towards the other end of the square. Such social consciousness came to the fore in American art in the interwar period; Soyer was just one such artist who documented the human cost of a broken economy.

However, Raeben's repeated positioning of the viewer as across the street, down the block, or one or two floors up from the scene blocks this kind of identification with the figures in his work. Rather than engaging with the figures, the viewer is encouraged to see Raeben's artwork in terms of form: masses of color, basic shapes, and the fizzy lines that animate the surface. For all their energy and color, his works convey social detachment: figures are not identifiable beyond their gender, and they register as a crowd, not as a series of individuals. They remain part of the overall image, rather than the city becoming a backdrop for the figures. Raeben's work thus eschews the kind of social documentary, protest, or partisanship seen in much of the art of the interwar period. Instead, he emphasized a position articulated in the nineteenth-century: "art for art's sake"—art's purpose is the creation of an aesthetic experience.[26]

Modern artists living in cities created scenes of the countryside on day trips or vacations, often gravitating to locations popular with other artists, e.g., Provincetown, or Gloucester, Massachusetts. In Raeben's landscapes, long views again position the viewer as an observer rather than as a participant. We see this in an untitled work [Fig. 3] which captures a beach view from afar. The strand curves gently from right to left and back again, crammed with bathers, while at the far end there is a suggestion of a ship, or perhaps a boardwalk. At this distance, the human figures become a feature of the landscape, buzzing with color. One surviving view of Provincetown, executed in oil, similarly positions figures as staffage; the main subject is the landscape.

Three pastels [Figs. 4, 5, 6], depicting a street in a suburb or small town, provide a look at Raeben's working process. The first untitled sketch [Fig. 4] captures the main shapes: floating parallelograms mark the location of the roofs of houses, the utility pole plants itself nearly dead center, and the scratchy-looking suggestions of power lines draw our attention to a tiny blue oval with red lettering. Using the side of a white pastel crayon, Raeben blocked in the lighter areas of the work; sky and street form a block of light, centered on the power pole. A large, light grey sedan commands the foreground.

The second work [Fig. 5] retains the utility pole with powerlines just to the left of center while increasing its size; it now anchors the entire composition. The row of houses with sketchy contours gains definition, packing much of the right-hand side, and the oval street sign grows slightly more visible in the middle ground on the left. The third, most finished work [Fig. 6], renders the view from slightly closer in and from a slightly higher vantage point. Here, Raeben omits the powerlines and trades the street traffic for a row of cars parked perpendicularly to the street. The utility pole and dented trash bin at center form a solid axis from top to bottom of the composition and the whole image now nearly fills the page. The artist worked up the surface more fully, with additional color and blending, and the oval sign—reading "Esso"—has become larger and more legible, as is the front of a car at the far left. (The pronounced oval opening between and below the headlights suggests, although not definitively, that this could be a 1957 Buick.) A low diagonal composed of houses and a row of parked cars compresses the narrow street against the repeating verticals, one of which—given the oval gas station sign—is probably a gas pump. The buildings on the left of the street are taller and blockier than the A-frame roofs that sit above the cars on the other side, suggesting that this is a shopping street. The empty spaces of the street and the left foreground contrast markedly with Raeben's packed and energetic city views. The adjustments to the composition, the increased attention to the hues of buildings and objects, and the development of areas solidly filled with color together reveal the artist's working method.

Of the three works, this is the only one that bears his signature. As family members and students have reported, Raeben rarely bothered to sign his works.[27] Although the absence of a signature does not mean a work is unfinished, a signature, especially on the front of a work, usually signifies that the artist is finished with it. The signature here thus suggests several possibilities: that Raeben wished to mark it as complete, that he wanted to register his presence on the scene, or that it had a special significance for him.

In sum, although Raeben left few marks on the tapestry of American art, we can still trace, in part, the thread he left through his studies and exhibitions. His extant work reveals an artist who gravitated to the formal process of making art rather than seeking subject matter to serve as a vehicle for social or political commentary. The few remaining works, such as those of the small town's street, show him working carefully to produce pictures with visual balance and finely tuned mood, whether via color, form, or mass—or all three. He emerges as an artist who joyfully embraced the freedom of expression that modernism brought with it.

Fig. 3 Norman Raeben, F.10, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Fig. 4. Norman Raeben, 4.14, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Fig. 5. Norman Raeben, 5.13, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Fig. 6. Norman Raeben, 7.2, 1932-1950s, Josh Raeben's collection.

[1] I am relying on the unpublished, brief biographical sketch produced by Raeben's son, Jay Raeben in the early 1970s, kindly furnished to me by Fabio Fantuzzi.

[2] Biographical sketch, Jay Raeben. For a history of the Art Students' League, see Raymond Steiner, *The Art Students' League of New York: a History*. Saugerties, NY, CSS Publications, Inc., 1999.

[3] Unfortunately, the paintings from his travels were stolen. Jay Raeben, biographical sketch. Claudia Carr Levy, one of Raeben's students later in his life, reports that at one point Raeben's Connecticut studio "caught fire[…]nearly [his] entire body of work went up in flames." A. Carrera, F. Fantuzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts: Songs, Film, Painting, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe,* Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, p. 192.

[4] This pattern is documented in many artists' biographies. For a useful overview, see Wanda Corn, *The Great American Thing: Modern art and National Identity, 1915-1935*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1999.

[5] Harry Holzman, "The Founding of the American Abstract Artists' Group: A Reminiscence," in *Progressive Geometric Abstraction in America: 1934-1955: Selections from the Peter B. Fischer Collection.* Ex. Cat., Fred L. Emerson Gallery, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY. September 26-November 7, 1987, pp. 9-11.

[6] This discussion is indebted to Norman Kleeblatt and Susan Chevlowe, *Painting a Place in America: Jewish Artists in New York 1900-1945*, New York, The Jewish Museum, May 16-September 9, 1991, pp. 135-142.

[7] The defining studies of The Ten are the unpublished dissertation by Isabel Dervaux and an article, Isabel Dervaux, "The Ten: An Avant-Garde Group in New York," in *Archives of American Art Journal* 31, No. 2 (1988).

[8] Jay Raeben, biographical sketch.

[9] *Modern Paintings and Sculpture. May 7th to 14th, 1934*. Jennie E. Precker, Albert M. Canter and Isador N. Steinberg. Newark, N.J, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, 1934. Cited in the biographical chronology prepared by Fabio Fantuzzi, who has my thanks for sharing it with me ahead of publication.

[10] Exhibition announcement, Contemporary Arts Gallery. Smithsonian American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Libraries, Washington DC. I thank Fabio Fantuzzi for sharing a reproduction of the gallery announcement with me.

[11] *New York Times*, November 4, 1934, p. X10.

[12] The Guild Gallery was open for two seasons: 1935-1937.

[13] For a history of the Guild Gallery, see Andrea Pappas, "In Search of a Jewish Audience: New York's Guild Art Gallery, 1935-1937," in *Journal of American Jewish History* 98, Vol. 4 (2014), pp. 263-288.

[14] Box 1, folder 24, Daily Record Notebook, undated page and a page dated February 20th. Guild Art Gallery Records, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[15] The literature on the Armory Show is large. For a comprehensive overview, see M. Satin Kushner, K. Orcutt, eds., *The Armory Show at 100: Modernism and Revolution*, New York Historical Society Museum and Library, 2013.

[16] C.N. Blake, K. Orcutt, M.S. Kushner, eds., *The Armory Show at 100. Modernism and Revolution,* , New York, New York Historical Society, 2013, pp.1, 16, and Appendix A. The latter provides a complete checklist of the Armory Show as exhibited in New York.

[17] Notable exceptions include Albert Barnes, Solomon Guggenheim in New York, and Alfred Stieglitz, John Quinn, Walter Arensberg, and the Cone sisters in Baltimore. Small galleries such as Stieglitz's 291 exhibited work that strongly challenged prevailing artistic norms.

[18] Quoted in B. Altshuler, *The Avant-Garde in Exhibition: New Art in the Twentieth Century*. New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994, p. 68.

[19] Title phrase of Jacob Riis' text, which had been circulating widely at the time. Full text available at https://archive.org/details/howotherhalflive00riis_1.

[20] https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-citroen-ds-19-why-its-the-ultimate-classic-car-1430501156.

[21] The portraits are addressed elsewhere in this catalogue.

[22] https://www.nycstreetdesign.info/lighting/type-m-pole.

[23] Yellow did not become a requirement for taxicabs until the 1960s; however, one New York company opted for yellow as its brand color in the nineteen-teens or early nineteen-twenties. https://time.com/4640097/yellow-taxi-cabs-history/

[24] The classic study of Impressionist engagement with the city is Robert Herber, *Impressionism: Art Leisure and Parisian Society.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

[25] A. Chave, "'Who Will Paint New York?': 'The World's New Art Center' and the Skyscraper Paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe," in *American Art*, Vol. 5, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1991), pp. 86-107.

[26] This notion came under fire in the twentieth century, particularly in the 1930s. See, for example, Walter Benjamin's 1935 essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" published in at least two versions in the mid- to late-1930s. The French edition appeared in 1936.

[27] Personal communication, Fabio Fantuzzi. September 10, 2024.

“Way of Seeing and Being Seen”: Norman Raeben in Paris

Stefania Portinari

“From one generation to another, nothing changes except the things seen, and it is the things seen that make that generation,” wrote Gertrude Stein in 1938, recalling avant-garde Paris, where she joined her brother Leo in 1903 to become a writer and collector.[1] It is “the way of seeing and being seen” that changes, whereas human nature remains the same: what changes are the streets, the modes of transportation, the architecture, and the objects around us. If, indeed, it is the things we see that shape our perception of the world and spark the renewal of artists; if it is the fortune or fate of being in the right environment—of discovering the unexpected in certain museums or neighborhoods—that alters one’s path, then to truly understand the paintings of Norman Raeben (Numa Rabinowitz) from the 1920s to 1930s, we must look at the state of the avant-garde in Paris at the time of his arrival in 1925, as well as the lingering spirit of both inertia and rebirth in that period.

Raeben was twenty-four years old, newly married, and determined to be a painter. During his childhood, he had traveled between Europe and America several times, accompanying his father on literary tours. He settled in New York at the age of fourteen, studying at the Educational Alliance Art School, the National Academy of Design, and the Art Students League, where he also exhibited his work in group shows tied to these institutions.[2] When *The Macon News*, an American newspaper, announced his departure for France on February 4th, 1925, Paris was a city brimming with cultural activity: it had recently hosted the Olympic Games, André Breton had published the Surrealist Manifesto in late 1924, and preparations were in progress for the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, which was set to open in April after multiple delays due to the Great War. It was there that Art Deco had its moment of greatest splendor, even as it was already on its way to becoming a well-imitated and recognized trend—one that would even migrate to the U.S. in the form of streamlined design. The luster of the pavilion promoted by the magazine *L’Esprit Nouveau*, designed by Le Corbusier and Amédée Ozenfant, was striking.

None of this, however, seems to have left a mark on the artistic production and taste of the young Raeben, who did not even participate in the independent salons—from the Salon d’Automne to the one organized by the Société des artistes indépendants—which, at that time, had undergone a transformation with regard to foreign artists, who were put in rooms separate from the French, divided by nationality.[3] His background and subsequent training as a ‘realist’ painter likely pushed him more toward an ecstatic pilgrimage to museums, to encounter an established canon of art, and toward more intellectual encounters—visiting places where he sought poetry and the dream of a Paris he had come to expect as described by so many others: a city of artists and a melting pot of multicultural acceptance.

If we cannot know what other inspirations or visual references, what votive offerings of the soul he brought back with him, if he painted works or drew sketches at that time, if they were damaged or stolen along with the loot taken from his studio in 1926, or lost in subsequent moves, or even later destroyed in moments of regret, what emerges in the meantime is his subsequent journey, between 1931 and 1932. It is a journey crucial to both a change in attitude and in palette for the young artist. To see this evolution, one only needs to compare the portraits he painted in 1926, which still reflect the dark tones and compositional solidity typical of the 1920s, with the few surviving pastels of Parisian scenes, which can be assigned to a period between 1925 and the mid-1930s. When we also consider the

scant clues we have about what he might have exhibited at American shows of the time, we can conclude that his pastels depicting scenes of New York and Paris, as well as landscapes depicting France and Palestine, were present, at least at the "Landscapes in Pastel" exhibition at the Rear Gallery of Contemporary Arts Galleries in New York at the end of 1934.[4]

The effect of Raeben's second stay indeed results in a visual update with 'pleasant' tones, which can be seen in various cityscapes that reflect a certain cliché of Parisian representation: the typical places of socializing and entertainment, people in cafés, fashionable passersby, in acidic and pastel colors, yet drawn in a seismographic and symphonic style, rendered with barely sketched strokes like visual notes, though rich in irony and festivity.

The French art system of the time, already animated by almost fifty years of annual group exhibitions that had become independent from the state-run salon (or nearly sixty years, if including the eight exhibitions by the Société Anonyme Coopérative of artists, painters, sculptors, engravers, etc., which, since 1874, had introduced the so-called Impressionists, or even more if we consider Gustave Courbet's bold move in 1855), had dismantled the 'monopoly of privilege' of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, but had left the entire art market concentrated in Paris, ensuring that this center remained the primary magnet attracting aspiring artists.[5]

Thus, even Americans, who initially directed their love and interest towards Italy until the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly Rome and Venice—as did all members of the European upper classes—eventually began to see Paris and Munich as places where a new modernity was emerging. Despite continuing to pursue a decidedly academic painting style composed in the studio—according to the principles followed by the Art Students League, which Raeben also attended—they attempted to establish their own art market, especially for landscape painting, seeking buyers mainly among wealthy American bourgeois who traded with Europe, exemplified by the Hudson River School and depictions of the American South or West exploration.[6]

In these transnational exchanges, where the desire for innovation intersected with traditional tastes, private art schools played a pivotal role. In Paris, for example, they often adopted the name 'academy,' like the Académie Julian (established in 1868, and widely recognized not only for its prestige but also for its notable students, including many Americans), or were set up in the studios of individual artists (such as Henri Matisse's early efforts, motivated by the need for a reliable income) or in shared rented spaces. In the case of so-called American Impressionism, the most brilliant and early exceptions were John Singer Sargent and Mary Cassatt, who truly went to France in the 1870s and 1880s immersing themselves in the French Impressionist environment, with an eye turned towards portrait production. Only in the late 1880s and early twentieth century did American artists genuinely begin to imitate Impressionist styles in their own way. This happened through unique personal connections, such as the suggestions given by Cassatt herself to painter Lousine Waldron Elder, who studied in Paris in 1875 and who later, along with her husband Henry Osborne Havemeyer, became one of the major collectors of the movement. Another key example is the Stein family, who, thanks to Sarah and Michael, brought works by Matisse to San Francisco for the first time in 1907. Although these events were distant in both time and space from Raeben's own experiences, he too was drawn to the mythos of Paris as the artistic center of the world.

What stands out more in the generation of artists following those early pioneers of American landscape painting is the remarkable exception of Theodore Robinson. He visited Giverny during Monet's time and became part of the community of American painters who settled nearby, embracing the concept of an elegiac nature depicted with vibrant brushwork. Robinson famously stated that "American life is so unpaintable" in comparison. More interesting still, in terms of possible inspiration for the early Parisian Raeben, are the cityscapes of Frederick Childe Hassam. Hassam studied at the Académie Julian and painted angles of Paris, blending an academic approach with Impressionist and Post-Impressionist brightness. Returning to New York in 1889, Hassam applied a similar approach to that American metropolis, focusing on Fifth Avenue and its surroundings rather than social themes, as seen in works like *Winter in Union Square* (1889-1890) or *Allies Day* (1917), with skyscrapers and flags reminiscent of the Fauvist Pierre-Albert Marquet, before returning to depict the New England countryside.[7]

Most aspiring artists who flocked to Paris in the latter half of the nineteenth century did not initially focus on the Impressionists but rather on an academic canon. Those who arrived late, in the 1880s and 1890s, instead looked directly to the now-famous Impressionists. Likewise, those who arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century rarely joined the very exclusive reformist circles of the avant-garde. Thus, in the mid-1920s, and again between 1931 and 1932, we lack definitive accounts of the circles Raeben frequented, but it is reasonable to assume that he drew inspiration from earlier movements. His B2.P.0 [Fig. 1] is characterized by a dense texture and solid composition despite the softness of pastel. We might compare it to memories of Camille Pissarro's snowy scenes, such as *L'hiver à Pontoise* (1873), or to Gustave Caillebotte's *Vue de toits*. *Effet de neige* (1878; Musée d'Orsay, Paris). However, these influences may have already been filtered through the American interpretation by Robert Henri—who taught at the Art Students League in New York during the early twentieth century and whom Raeben regarded as his mentor—evidenced in works such as *Snow in New York* (1902; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC), which in turn seems to evoke Hassam's atmospheric pieces like *Columbus Avenue. Rainy Day. Boston* (1885-1886).

It is important to note that Norman Raeben had already studied under the skilled draftsman and landscape artist Abbo Ostrowsky at the Educational Alliance. Ostrowsky was an artist known for rendering trees as vertical lines and for creating figures that cut through and animate landscapes full of picturesque scenery. Later, Raeben would come to look up to Robert Henri, who became a reference point for American Realism and for the Ashcan School. Although Henri, in his theoretical statements, rejected Impressionism as a new mannerism, he actually embraced the themes of modern life that were central to it.

Fig. 1. Norman Raeben, B2.P0, early 1930s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Even if Raeben's education could have been sporadic, incomplete, or sometimes frustrating to the artist himself in its being so disjointed, it is clear that his initial training was academic, rooted in a peripheral and peculiar American academy within an evolving art system in the early decades of the twentieth century. His desire to travel to Paris and explore was, therefore, also an opportunity for artistic renewal.

What seems more certain from his stays in Paris is a significant connection with a milieu of Jewish intellectuals: we might hypothesize that he too resided in Montparnasse, where many artists from Eastern Europe, as well as Americans from the United States and Latin America, found a home in a neighborhood that still offered affordable rents and lodgings compared to the increasingly gentrified Latin Quarter. Gertrude Stein also reflects on this environment, recounting the story of Pablo Picasso, who arrived in Paris in 1900 "in a world of painters who had already learned all they could from what they were looking at." Stein puts forth that these artists painted only what they believed appeared to their eyes, while true innovations, she argues, only began with the Post-Impressionists and Seurat, who started to question what they saw as they began to paint differently: not a presumed truth, but a sensation.[8]

Among Picasso's friends were many writers, including Max Jacob, Guillaume Apollinaire, André Salmon and later Stein, Jean Cocteau, and the Surrealists, rather than fellow painters. This may have been due to his combative and independent personality since—as Stein humorously noted—it didn't make sense for him to "have painter friends if he could paint the way he did." For Raeben, on the other hand, it was likely because that community was the most obvious and safe point of reference, a supportive and welcoming group that already knew of his father's reputation. For both of them, there was undoubtedly the fact that they "needed ideas," and those exchanges provided them with just that.[9]

Raeben would later tell his students that, during this time, he had developed particularly close relationships with Chaïm Soutine, Jules Pascin, and Marc Chagall. Although Raeben's sister, Marie Waife-Goldberg, later

served as a liaison for contacts with American galleries and magazines on Chagall's behalf, there is no evidence of Chagall's influence on Raeben in terms of subject matter, color palette, or technique. Similarly, there is no evident influence from Soutine, except for the heavy brushstrokes found in some of Raeben's much later portraits, and even those seem to have been more about reflective dialogue, as Soutine was known to be a mesmerizing figure. Thus, despite Raeben's claims, which were recounted much later and which perhaps even adopted a slight hagiographical tone, it is more accurate to look toward the Fauves and Matisse for insight into the changes in his painting, albeit from a distance and later in his artistic development.

What he learned was a type of post-Impressionism with a quick, graceful touch that leaned towards Expressionism, inspired by artists who had adopted a post-Gauguin approach to unnatural color and liberated forms. It is Gertrude Stein again that found the right words to explain it: "in the nineteenth century, painters discovered the need to always have a model to look at; in the twentieth century, they discovered that the only thing not to do was to look at a model."[10] This same lesson is what Raeben taught his students in the 1970s, the very same one he passed on to Bob Dylan: do not focus on the real object as if in an academic life-drawing session, do not think of the 'correct' form it should take, do not try to depict a vase as a subject in itself, but first evoke a suggestion of it, let the perception of a certain theme emerge, and then act on the impulse.[11]

We are, therefore, within the evolution of painting, in a world where technique is disintegrating, in search of capturing modernity. This development follows the early explorations of the Nabis who, after their encounter with Gauguin, as Maurice Denis later explained, embraced the idea of a work of art as an expression of a sensation experienced.

Raeben also developed a swiftness in his gestures, allowing himself to capture an outdoor scene almost like a sketch. It is the same pictorial vortex that in the 1930s took hold of the Italian Filippo de Pisis, who arrived in Paris in 1925 (the same year as Raeben), and whose palette became lighter and more vibrant. If the artist can be interpreted in a post-Impressionist sensitivity, as Nico Stringa[12] has previoulsy noted, he has also moved beyond it, into a kind of 'delicate' expressionism seen in the landscapes of Pierre-Albert Marquet and the unreal colors of Raoul Dufy, which were perhaps further developed by later artists. In the 1930s, Raeben primarily worked with pastels (which he favored alongside watercolor and charcoal), influenced by the possibility of rapid and light handling. If we were to situate these works in a European artistic context, they would align most closely with the soft tonalism of the École de Paris.[13]

This classification does not indicate a specific group or movement but rather a flavor, an allure that existed between the 1920s and 1940s—composite but untroubled, ornamental yet graceful, seeking modernity without disruptions, closely linked to the cosmopolitan influence in Paris. Some viewed this as a nationalist group that integrated the contribution of foreigners, as Waldemar George argued in a contentious debate in 1931; others, like André Warnod, saw its reality as something that existed solely and precisely thanks to the presence of foreigners. The École de Paris was a mix of delicate figurative work, domesticated stylish innovations, and a lack of interest in the disruption of the avant-garde.[14]

There is no leading promoter, critic, or gallery owner at the head of this ambiguous entity. The ranks of the artists involved include names of foreigners who came to Paris from the far corners of the world, from the Japanese Tsuguharu Foujita to the Russians Soutine and Chagall. Yet, among them, there are also names that are little remembered today, who at the time frequented the same artistic circles: from André Lhote's studio-school to the Académie de la Grande Chaumière.

Raeben was never present as a part of this group and never appeared in the collective exhibitions dedicated to this scene: neither in contemporary exhibits, the first being held in Italy at the XVI International Art Exhibition of the City of Venice (the 1928 Venice Biennale), in a room dedicated to "The School of Paris" curated by Renato Paresce, with an introductory text by Mario Tozzi (one of the painters on display), which included 43 artists residing in Paris long-term like Chagall and Ossip Zadkine; nor in the subsequent 1930 exhibition at the XVII Biennale, in "Appel d'Italie" curated by Mario Tozzi and Waldemar George and composed of a cosmopolitan mix of invitees, nor in later celebratory exhibitions. This proves that including him in that context would be premature, as he did not have real connections to that environment, and also given that his stay in 1925 was rather transient.

If we were to seek similarities with some of the other painters from that same milieu, we might compare him to the Russian Serge Férat for the use of light fuchsia and pale green hues, like in *Construction de Maisons* (Construction of Houses, early 1930s) [Fig. 2], or to certain watercolors and oils on paper by André Lhote with pieces from the 1930s, like *De Notre Terrasse à Mirmande, la Vallée du Rhône* (around 1930) or *Rochers de Gordes* (1939). We may also make a connection to the delicate gouache effects of Geneviève Marie Gallibert's marine and urban landscapes, particularly for the presence of small figures, or to certain compositions akin to the illustration style of Russian artist Olga Sacharoff, who looked to Henri Rousseau, as seen in *Zoo* (circa 1930).[15]

If these artists could be considered his peers—in that they reflected a certain sensitivity to their time period—to truly understand what triggered an initial change and what sources influenced Raeben, we must look further back. One hypothesis is that the encouragement to go to the French capital came from Max Weber who, despite being twenty years older than Raeben, had a similar biographical story. Like Raeben, he was born in Poland (then part of the Russian Empire) in 1881 and emigrated to the United States at the age of ten (while Raeben was born in the region of present-day Ukraine in 1901 and arrived in New York at fourteen). From 1905 to 1908, Weber had indeed lived in Paris and became involved in the avant-garde scene, thanks to his friendships with Picasso and Matisse, as well as with Leo and Gertrude Stein; thanks to them, he was able to witness one of the most important art collections of the early twentieth century taking form. During that time, Weber witnessed the rise of the Fauves at the 1905 Salon d'Automne, but later transitioned from a dark Expressionism style using bold colors, as seen in *The Geranium* (1911), to a softer style imbued with Jewish subjects in the mid-1910s, then turning toward Post-Cubism. We can thus assume that his stories, more than his painting, left an impression on Raeben.

Later, during his second trip to Paris, accompanied by Isador Steinberg, Raeben stayed in an apartment belonging to Roger Bissier. However, Bissier's dense, dark pastels, which were reminiscent of André Derain, do not even have directly influenced Raeben's style.[16] In the way Raeben depicted small figures in the 1930s, there is instead a hint of the passersby created by Maurice Utrillo. Utrillo had already shown work at the Armory Show in New York in 1913 (thus too early to have a fruitful impact on Raeben) and had held exhibitions in Paris from 1921 at Galerie Weill, Bernheim-Jeune, and the Salon d'Automne, garnering a name for himself. However, the most evident influence for Raeben's Parisian pastels is Raoul Dufy.

The American critic Howard Devree had already noted this when reviewing Raeben's exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Gallery in New York in 1934: not the Fauvist Dufy of 1905, but rather the Dufy who adopted a brilliant chromatic palette after his stay in Taormina in 1922 and following his trip to Morocco with Paul Poiret in 1926. In 1925, Dufy exhibited at the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the same year Raeben was also present, and in 1930 and 1950, he spent time in the USA, holding two exhibitions in New York, in addition to receiving one of the Grand Prizes at the Venice Biennale in 1952.

It is not the Fauvist distortion, but rather the unnatural

Fig. 2. Serge Férat, *Construction de Maisons*, early 1930s, Collection of Haba and Alban Roussot.

use of color, the virtuosity of a prodigious draftsman, and the apparent carefreeness and elegance that are irresistible. Whispers of small human silhouettes, flat backgrounds, and unreal colors that call to mind Derain—such as in *Les Quais de le Tamise* (1905-1906)—as well as the edges of houses and buildings underscored by the cloisonnism of Albert Marquet (as seen in *Fête Foraine au Havre* [1906; Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux]): it is always Dufy who returns. Dufy's influence is felt from the posters of *Les Affiches à Trouville* (1906; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris), which become a matrix for the streets of New York, to the effect of the vertical pole and the fluttering of little flags in *Le Yatch Pavoisé au Havre* (1904) or *Les Bains du Casino Marie-Christine à Saint-Adresse* (1902; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris); there is the same allure in *Un Bal Champêtre* (1905) [Fig. 3] or *Le Bal Champêtre* (1906), even in *A view of an Interior in Paris*.[17]

Raeben's Parisian scenes, which seem to be both a sketch and a dreamlike memory, serve as tangible proof that he was indeed there. And what was that city like in the 1930s is embodied, among other tales, by a character who never existed, the painter Jusep Torres Campalans, a painter invented by writer Max Aub, who published a book in 1958 claiming that this Catalan artist had developed Cubism before Braque and Picasso—a notion briefly taken as fact. In this imaginative tale, Campalans, Picasso, and others linger in a Barcelona café, listening to the journalist Jordi Avellac, who reminisces about his time in Paris. He reads aloud an article he wrote for *La Vanguardia*, recalling the city's streets filled with omnibuses, people waiting in lines, newsstands, bookstores on every corner, bistros, theater posters on columns, and violet sellers. For, as he puts it, "the truth is that Paris is not a city, but a way of life, a way of understanding life."[18]

Raeben, however, returned to the United States and would never live in Paris again, except for a brief visit from May to September in 1951 and a later stay in 1970 with a group of students from the painting school he had established in 1946 on the eleventh floor of Carnegie Hall. This shift in focus to teaching came after a personal crisis that led him to dedicate himself entirely to education, mirroring what Serge Guilbaut describes as the moment when, between 1945 and 1947, a distinctly American avant-garde emerged with Abstract Expressionism, challenging France's artistic dominance.[19] From the École de Paris to his school at Carnegie Hall, Raeben, like many others, transitioned into a teaching role, and his own artistic career took a backseat.

The business of painting schools, which had led to the establishment of American colonies of painters in France, from Grez to Giverny, offering *plein air* painting courses during the summer, had expanded within the USA along the Atlantic coast. This immense plethora of offerings could range from venues exclusively for women artists to electrifying experiences like Black Mountain College. Founded in North Carolina in 1933 and closed in 1957 for financial reasons, Bauhaus masters like Josef Albers found refuge there. In the name of a philosophical and liberal education, musicians and dancers like John Cage and Merce Cunningham held workshops, mixing music and experimental arts, where Robert Rauschenberg studied. Throughout this period, the idea of striving to create American art continued nationally, but Raeben's school adopted a more philosophical, humanistic, and encouraging approach.

Fig. 3. Raoul Dufy, *Un Bal Champêtre*, 1905, private collection.

His talent as an illustrator increasingly emerged in the pastels of the 1930s dedicated to New York, along with the gift he had demonstrated since childhood for caricatures (which perhaps echoed the humorous spirit of part of his father's writings). This could have steered him toward another avenue of creativity, considering the entire tradition of illustrators who later became comic or animated cartoon creators, from Ub Iwerks (Ubbe Eert Iwwerks) to Walt Disney to Elzie Crisler Segar, or into the realm of graphic design, as would happen initially for Andy Warhol, seeking fortune amid the high demand for illustrations by weekly magazines in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[20] This is evidenced even by the young protagonist of one of J.D. Salinger's *Nine Stories* (1953), who presents himself under the pseudonym Jean de Daumier-Smith and has painted since childhood. Daumier-Smith sets out for Paris, accompanied by his mother and step-father—he is a failed stockbroker, who reinvents himself as a consultant for an American art gallery and museum company—returning to New York with artistic ambitions in 1839, at twenty-nine years old. This time frame aligns closely with Raeben's, who was thirty-two when he returned the second time from Paris. Salinger's character attends an art school between 48th Street and Lexington Avenue and applies to teach at Mr. and Mrs. Yoshoto's school in Montreal—which turns out to be a correspondence school for housewives, photographers, and even a nun. He sends as his submission a half dozen of his paintings brought back from France along with a dozen examples of American "commercial art": works suitable for advertising and illustrations, composed in wash drawings, which are gouaches, a broad concept that includes inks diluted in water, but also watercolors, tempers, and acrylics applied with brushes over pen or pencil strokes, a very rapid painting style, not far from Raeben's preferences.[21] He too is seeking in his own way a modern path for American art and a dimension for himself, a possibility to engage in art that can also be a job, but he is not interested in art compromised with commerce. He is immersed in a complex intellectual environment, and his private crisis perhaps demonstrates his uncertainty and difficulty in finding his place in a changing world. Yet he, like Bob Dylan recounts in an interview, seems to have in his school a diverse group of students, from wealthy ladies from Florida to a retired policeman, a bus driver, a lawyer, students expelled from fine arts academies, young girls who adore him—"various types of people you wouldn't expect to find involved in art or painting"—but that place "was something different"; it was a school of life and not just painting, a philosophical school.[22]

Raeben's passion for art history is also demonstrated by his project to write a manual, which he began to compose with the help of some students, discussing Cézanne and Picasso, who hold such significance in American history, considering the events through which the director of MoMA, Alfred Barr, managed to acquire *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) by Picasso in 1939 and establishes its role (albeit with a pre-cubist and formalist interpretation that would later be surpassed) in the exhibition "Picasso: Forty Years of His Art" that same year and how his cult is also very American, as evidenced by how, after a period of crisis, he regained popularity, and upon his death in 1973, his forgeries became the subject of Orson Welles's film *Vérités et Mensonges* (1973).[23]

When Dylan attended that school for two months in the spring of 1974, he was encouraged not to focus on details and was taught "to see," to become aware of what he already felt "in an unconscious way." He benefited from a welcoming philosophical counseling environment that fit within a culture of synesthesia, very Yiddish yet also idealistic, existing in America within the intellectual climate of neo-avant-gardes, stemming from the European theosophies that passed to the Bauhaus masters exiled in America, to the 1970s climate of minimalist artist-thinkers like Sol LeWitt and Smithson.[24] As he would later write for his song *Not Dark Yet* (1998), "behind every beautiful thing, there's been some kind of pain," even for those who have been "in merry Paris."[25] Raeben, similarly, despite his unease, continually demonstrated love for drawing and painting (and also for humanity), constantly reflecting back on that cradle of modernity which was the French capital, that garden of experimentation where he had lived in hopeful youth. We can try to imagine what and how Raeben might have seen and felt; we now attempt to see him through this lens of interpretation because, as Jordi Avellac told the nonexistent painter Jusep Torres Campalans, "wherever you are, you will always remember Paris."[26]

[1] G. Stein, *Picasso*, London, 1938, p. 19: “Nothing changes from one generation to another except the things seen and the things seen make that generation, that is to say nothing changes in people from one generation to another except the way of seeing and being seen.” Italian translation by Vivianne Di Maio, G. Stein, *Picasso*, Milan, 1973, p. 19; see also *Matisse, Cézanne, Picasso. L’aventure des Stein*, Ex. Cat. (Paris, Grand Palais, Galeries Nationales, October 5, 2011 - January 16, 2012; San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, May 21 - September 6, 2011; New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, February 22 - June 3, 2012), Paris, 2011.

[2] For the life of Raeben (1901-1978), see the biographical note written by curator Fabio Fantuzzi in this volume. Regarding the artist’s studies, it is noteworthy that the National Academy of Design, founded among others by Samuel Morse in 1825, who had studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in London and thus has a long tradition, continued to draw inspiration from academic principles.

[3] The VIII Olympics, held from July 5 to 27, 1924, also left impressions in the artistic field regarding the depiction of bodies and, of course, great enthusiasm for the modernity of the city; see, among others, *Paris 1924: Sport, Art and the Body*, Ex. Cat. (Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, June 19 - November 3), ed. by C. Vout, C. Young, London, 2024. The *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in 1925, which included 34 nations, took place from April to October; thus, Raeben was in the city before leaving for a trip to Palestine and Egypt and returning to New York. The artist does not appear to have exhibited even at the main Parisian exhibitions of the time, particularly those organized by the Société des artistes indépendants (which began in 1884), the so-called Salon des Indépendants, held from March 21 to May 3, 1925, nor at the one organized by the Société du Salon d’Automne (the Salon d’Automne, founded in 1903, which from 1924 changed the arrangement by nationality, a new rule that caused various protests even for assigning less visible rooms); see *Société des artistes indépendants. 36, Catalogue de la 36e Exposition. 1925*, Ex. Cat. (Paris, Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, March 21 to May 3), Paris, 1925, and *Catalogue des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, dessin, gravure, architecture et art décoratif, exposés aux Tuileries* (Paris, Les Tuileries, September 26 - November 2), Paris, 1925. Thus, his journey takes on the character of a belated honeymoon and artistic discoveries, as well as an opportunity to visit Palestine.

[4] See the list of exhibitions compiled by the curator in this catalog, which shows that after Raeben’s participation in the 99th Annual Exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York in 1924, he would move to a collective exhibition at the “Young Men’s Hebrew Association at the Jewish Club” in New York in 1931, where he displayed oil and watercolor landscapes, as well as drawings, but featuring views of Manhattan, Jaffa, and Maine; then in 1934 to another collective exhibition at the “Young Men’s and Young Women’s Hebrew Association” in Newark, where collectors lent works, among others, by Amedeo Modigliani and Camille Pissarro, in which he exhibited a large landscape, the title and theme of which are unknown, and in the same year 1934, pastels were featured—presumably judging by the title of the collective—at the “Landscapes in Pastel” exhibition at the Rear Gallery of Contemporary Arts Galleries in New York.

[5] Among other now-classic fundamental studies, see E. Carter, R. Foster, J.N. Moddy, eds., *Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century France*, Baltimore, 1976; H.C. White, C.A. White, *Canvases and Careers. Institutional Change in the French Painting World*, Chicago, 1965; A. Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, 1971; P. Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic*, Cambridge, 1994.

[6] See, among others, B.H. Weinberg, C.R. Baratt, eds., *American Stories. Paintings of Everyday Life. 1765-1915*, Ex. Cat. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 12, 2009 - January 24, 2010; Los Angeles, LACMA, February 28 - May 23, 2010), New Haven-London, 2009; D. Lubin, *Picturing a Nation. Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America*, New Haven, 1994; A.L. Miller, *The Empire of the Eye. Landscape Representation and American Cultural Politics. 1825-1875*, Ithaca, 1993; K. Avery, “A Historiography of the Hudson River School,” in *American Paradise. The World of the Hudson River School*, New York, 1987, pp. 3-20; L.W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow. The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, Cambridge, 1988; C. Clark, “The Consequences of the Market Revolution in the American North,” in M. Stokes, S. Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America. Social, Political, and Religious Expressions. 1800-1880*, Charlottesville-London, 1996, pp. 23-42; T.E. Srebbins, ed., *The Lure of Italy. American Painters and the Italian Experience*, Ex. Cat. (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts), Boston, 1992.

[7] See B.H. Weinberg, D. Bolger, D.P. Curry, eds., *American Impressionism and Realism. The Painting of Modern Life. 1885-1915*, Ex. Cat. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum, May 10 - June 24), New York, 1994, p. 37, and B.H. Weinberg, E.E. Baker *et alii*, eds., *Childe Hassam. American Impressionist*, Ex. Cat. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), New Haven, 2004.

[8] G. Stein, *Picasso*, London, 1938, p. 12: “When he was nineteen years old, Picasso came to Paris, that was in 1900, into a world of painters who had completely learned everything they could from seeing at what they were looking. From Seurat to Courbet they were all looking with their eyes and Seurat’s eyes then began to tremble at what his eyes were seeing; he commenced to doubt if in looking he could see. Matisse too began to doubt what his eyes could see.”

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 16: “His friends in Paris were writers rather than painters; why have painters for friends when he could paint as he could paint? […] He needed ideas, anybody does, but not ideas for painting, no, he had to know those who were interested in ideas.”

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 12: “In the nineteenth century, painters discovered the need of always having a model in front of them; in the twentieth century, they discovered that they must never look at a model.”

[11] Raeben has been teaching painting since 1926 and later opened a real school in 1946.

[12] N. Stringa, “Norman Raeben: una modernità compatibile,” in A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Paintings, and Sculpture in Dylan’s Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, pp. 49-54: Raeben, according to Stringa, composes “a compatible art” that blends the teachings of European post-impressionists with the styles of the American Ashcan School.

[13] For more information, see F. Fantuzzi’s research on the sandpaper on which these Parisian pastels were created, which in some cases bear a Danish registered trademark from 1931, indicating that they can only be from after that date. It is hypothesized that Raeben purchased it during his second trip to Paris, when he traveled to Denmark to visit the Feigenberg branch of his family in 1932, or that such material was available commercially in France after 1931, noting that he made another stay in Paris in the summer of 1951. From this research, the figure of Charles Cobelle also emerges, a French Jewish artist roughly contemporary to Raeben and a student of Dufy, who was active from the late 1920s in Connecticut and may have been another channel of influence, particularly in the way he depicted silhouette-like figures. Additionally, a comparison with one of his instructors, Kimon Nicolaïdes, author of the book *The Natural Way to Draw* (completed around 1936 but published posthumously after his death in 1941), is relevant. In one chapter, he emphasizes the importance of gesture drawing, which he certainly highlighted during his lessons and appears significant regarding Raeben’s intention to blend silhouette subjects with the background.

[14] It seems that the term École de Paris was first used by André Warnod in the newspaper *Comœdia* on January 4, 1925, in the article “L’État et l’Art vivant.” For significant information about the presence of Jewish creatives in this context, see among others N. Nieszawer, D. Princ, eds., *Peintres juifs à Paris. 1905-1939. L’École de Paris*, Paris, 2000; R. Golan, “The Ecole Française versus the École de Paris. The Debate about the Status of Jewish Artists in Paris between the Wars,” in K. Silver, R. Golan, eds., *The Circle of Montparnasse. Jewish Artists in Paris. 1905-1945*, Ex. Cat. (New York, Jewish Museum), New York, 1985, pp. 80-87; on the presence of Americans see S. Lévy, ed., *A Transatlantic Avant-Garde. American Artists in Paris. 1918-1939*, Ex. Cat. (Giverny, Musée d’Art Américain, 2003), Giverny, 2003; M. Kaspi, ed., *Le Paris des étrangers depuis un siècle*, Paris, 1989; on the exhibitions that established this definition, see A. Rudckdeschel, “‘École de Paris’ In and Out of Paris (1928-1930). A Transregional Perspective on the Exhibitions of the ‘School of Paris’ in Venice, Cambridge, Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro,” in “Modernism in Migration. Stedelijk Studies Issue,” 9, Fall 2019, pp. 1-17, which notes that the first official exhibition dedicated to the movement was held in Venice in 1928, followed by others in Cambridge (Massachusetts) in 1929 and a traveling exhibition in Brazil between Recife, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro in 1930.

[15] See M. Tozzi, *La Scuola di Parigi*, in *Catalogo della XVI Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte della città di Venezia 1928*, Ex. Cat. (Venice, La Biennale di Venezia), Venice, 1928, pp. 121-129; G. Waldemar, “Appels d’Italie,” in *Catalogo della XVII Esposizione Internazionale d’Arte della città di Venezia 1930*, Ex. Cat. (Venice, La Biennale di Venezia), Venice, 1930, pp. 91-96.

[16] Information about his stays in Paris is quite sparse: during this occasion, he also traveled to Palestine before returning to New York; in the 1960s, he would recount having also taught as a painting instructor in Paris, though we do not know where or how.

[17] Among others, see S. Kreb, N. Chalbi, eds., *Raoul Dufy. Il pittore della gioia*, Ex. Cat. (Rome, Palazzo Cipolla, October 4, 2022 - February 26, 2023), Milan, 2022.

[18] M. Aub, *Jusep Torres Campalans* (1958), Palermo, 1992, p. 34.

[19] S. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom and the Cold War*, Chicago, 1983.

[20] See A. Barcal, O. Kunde, P. Tanner, *Andy Warhol. The Life Years. 1949-1959*, Munich, 2011.

[21] J.D. Salinger, “De Daumier-Smith’s Blue Period,” in J.D. Salinger, *Nine Stories*, New York, 1953, pp. 55-68: the artist sends “typical examples of American commercial art. Working mostly in washes.”

[22] B. Cartwright, “The Mysterious Norman Raeben,” in J. Bauldie, ed., *Wanted Man: In Search of Bob Dylan*, New York, 1991, pp. 85-90: these statements by Dylan are initially relayed to Pete Oppel; in Raeben’s school, there were “a lot of different kinds of people you’d never think would be into art or painting,” but “it was something else.”

[23] B. Dylan, *Chronicles Volume One*, New York-London, 2005, p. 55: Dylan writes that “Picasso had fractured the art world and cracked it wide open. I wanted to be like that.”

[24] See F. Fantuzzi, “Cenni di ermeneutica ebraica nelle teorie di Norman Raeben, figlio di Scholem Aleichem e maestro di Bob Dylan,” in F. Fantuzzi, ed., *Tales of Unfulfilled Times: Saggi critici in onore di Dario Calimani offerti dai suoi allievi,* Venice, 2017, pp. 53-77.

[25] *Not Dark Yet* is part of the album *Time Out of Mind*: “Well, I’ve been to London and I’ve been to gay Paree […] / Behind every beautiful thing, there’s some kind of pain.”

[26] M. Aub, *Jusep Torres Campalans* (1958), Palermo, 1992, p. 34.

Norman Raeben, American in Paris, European in New York

Nico Stringa

Inspired by Fabio Fantuzzi's years-long work on the painter and art theorist Norman Raeben, I am led to think, and thus believe, that there are few cases like that of Sholem Aleichem's son that are as suitable to exemplify, on the one hand, the continuity of a passion and vocation for painting, and on the other, the geo-poietic discontinuity in which they manifested over the course of several decades in the central part of the twentieth century.[1]

Despite the difficulty of precisely establishing the chronology of his paintings, we might conjure up our own path *per exempla* in order to propose some hypotheses regarding his artistic journey. I would start with the view of Piazza San Marco, *Venice* (1920s) [Fig. 1], a place so sacred to painting. Like few others, this piazza was extremely difficult to handle in the early decades of the 1900s. Even William Turner had avoided the straightforward frontal perspective of the basilica, choosing a less conventional angle, also adding chiaroscuro, thereby 'romanticizing' his approach, often in a metonymic way. Conversely, in earlier works, he adopted a bird's-eye view, as in *Juliet and her Nurse*, of a Piazza San Marco that transcended time. Paul Monet had outright rejected such a confined space, enclosed on all sides and too heavily characterized by tradition; Renoir had brought light into play with such a domineering presence that it seemed to drag the image away, swept off by the inextricable use of color. Raeben could not have been familiar with paintings like the innovative *Piazza San Marco after the Rain* by Pietro Fragiacomo or other examples of divisionist painting; his is a post-impressionist landscape, but not without a good degree of inventiveness. Having chosen to compress the longitudinal space onto the façade that rises upward, Raeben thereby transformed it into something different from the usual horizontality. With his interpretation, Raeben places himself at the level of many distinguished painters of the late 1800s, from Walter Sickert to Maurice B. Prendergast—not to mention those American painters who had helped shape him: Robert Henri, John Sloan, George Luks, George Bellows, and Max Weber. These influences pushed Raeben to an unbridgeable limit within the realm of 'touch' painting, which had been rendered obsolete not only by the *avant-garde* but by the purist shift of many artists after the Great War.[2] Raeben would soon become aware that the style of oil painting that did not follow the directives of the impressionists risked weighing down the pictorial space and stifling its composition, let us say. It is precisely these subsequent stages of Raeben's journey that document a sense of urgency to overcome this risk, and we could therefore say that it is the later developments that reveal the limitations of the earlier ones.

Let us then consider the next stage: two landscapes that serve to indicate the turning point brought about by Paul Cézanne's influence: the views of Provincetown, untitled [landscape near Provincetown] (1930s-1940s) [Fig. 2] and untitled [view of a harbor in Provincetown] (1930s-1940s) [Fig. 3]. These paintings present very different characteristics: the colors are light and balanced, the brushstrokes delicate and almost transparent, and the conformity to the objective reality only approximate, as if the function of the visible (the pre-text) were not to anchor the painter to an unchangeable reality but, on the contrary, to serve as a guide, a suggestion. Raeben does not reach the culmination of Cézanne's research: arriving at the threshold of decomposition. However, he does indeed distance himself carefully from the imitative process and ultimately arrives at the overall sensation of a place. It is also evident in these paintings how the brushstrokes, instead of getting stuck in the viscous surface as they did in earlier oils, now flow across the canvas, following a path that is not dictated by nature

Fig. 1. Norman Raeben, *Venice*, 1920s, private collection.

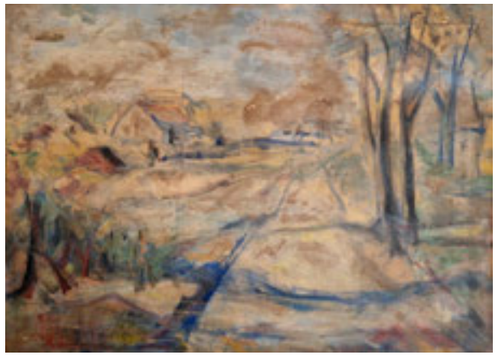


Fig. 2. Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape near Provincetown], 1930s-1940s, private collection.

Fig. 3. Norman Raeben, untitled [view of a harbor in Provincetown], 1930s-1940s, private collection.

but takes on its own direction. We see the painter allowing the brushstrokes to unfold in a way that serves the composition of the whole, the context.

Something similar happens in the still-life paintings that have passed through the 'interpretation' of Cézanne's analogous works. Paintings like untitled [still life with table and fruit] (1930s-1940s) [Fig. 4], untitled [abstract still life with table] (1930s-1940s) [Fig. 5], and untitled [still life with table and flowers] (1930s-1940s) [Fig. 6] are in dialogue with shapes that open themselves to an unforeseen space. Without achieving the estranging effect of the French master, Raeben's paintings from that cycle are appreciated as approximations to an indeterminate goal; their value lies in the development that the painter would soon imprint on his overall artistic vision.

It is precisely through urban landscapes that Raeben would be able to distinguish between construction and deconstruction of an image. This stemmed from a dual choice that Raeben made concerning his previous works: on the one hand, suspending the use of viscous oil paint, a choice that came to fruition as he distanced himself from the thinkings of his friends in the Ashcan School; on the other, focusing on the streets of metropolises (on both sides of the Atlantic), which he reinterprets as realities in constant metamorphosis. This movement, however, should not be misinterpreted in a modernist tone but, rather, as a highly original and profound reinterpretation of the relationship between Cézanne and Cubism. Raeben seems to have identified a third path that allowed him to develop a specific pictorial language of his own, through which, starting from the Cubist and abstract revolutions (well known to him but observed from a distance), he reached completely original and surprising results. It is now time to evaluate the significance of these results, even in this first retrospective anthology exhibition.

We are talking about the period dedicated to metropolitan life, more precisely to the populated streets of cities: roads filled with people in motion, rich in local color, and buildings overlapping and captured in quick succession, observed by an amused and unprejudiced eye. In those paintings, Raeben manages to replace the picturesque with an anti-picturesque, which, in turn, has an extremely pictorial character. He succeeds in this because the quick and fleeting, almost cinematic, attention to the entire urban ensemble leads him to abandon oil painting and identify the technical equivalent of that fluid, almost collective visibility that the individual artist

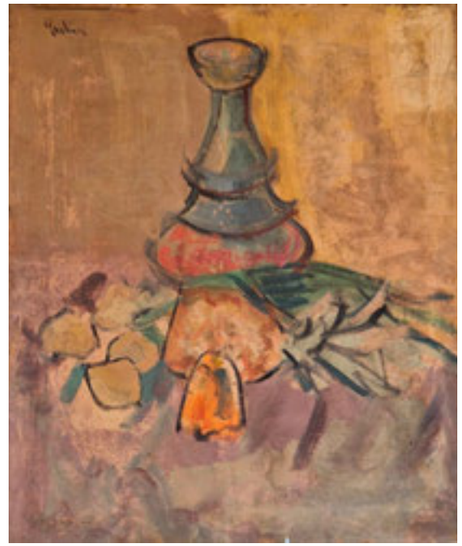


Fig. 4. Norman Raeben, untitled [still life with table and fruit], 1930s-1940s, private collection.

Fig. 5. Norman Raeben, untitled [abstract still life with table], 1930s-1940s, private collection.

believes he can describe and transcribe: the 'cinema' of urban life, the ribbon of houses that seem to move in their vivid colors and almost transparent structures, as if the painting had the power to perform x-rays rich in chromatic nuances. To complete this cycle, Raeben had to change his approach to involve multiple media: hence, the use of pastels, which allowed the artist to 'speak' a slang understandable to everyone, to 'play' a lively and universally appreciable jazz.

What gives the pastel works their distinctive character that makes them so significant in the context of European and American art of the 1930s? We might say this: in his pastels, Raeben abandons the foreground role of the figure and focuses, still with a figurative intent, on the urban landscape, which becomes something quite different from what was depicted in contemporary painting in the USA, both in the works of the Ashcan School and in the Group of Eight. Raeben moves away from the framework of "realism" while still dwelling on objective data available to everyone; we see him striving to capture a reality that the color filtered through segmented brushstrokes returns to us

Fig. 6: Norman Raeben, untitled [still life with table and flowers], 1930s-1940s, private collection.

charged with visions, pregnant with unreality. Thus, if on the one hand the figures, when they appear, are reduced to quick silhouettes, on the other, the clustering of buildings creates a transient urban panorama, on the edge of what is real. These works of art are rich in apparitions, expectations, and phantasmagorias, as in the pastel untitled [Paris city scene with metro, streetlights, and figures] (1932-1940s) [Fig. 7].

This journey into color brought Raeben to the point of no return when, as in the case of two landscapes of Provincetown, B4.P.13 (circa 1930s-1940s) [Fig. 8] and B.4.P.19 (circa 1930s-1940s) [Fig. 9], external references faded away, and the composition revealed itself in all its fullness, in its complete referential autonomy. Raeben could have developed this abstractist solution, which was full of possibilities; but he did not, faithful to his rather debatable principle that the non-figurative texture should belong to the initial stage of the artistic process, not to the final one as we are accustomed to thinking, following a bio-historiographic scheme we learned from the experiences of the pioneers of abstraction. Nevertheless, we note that in the pastels, the role of human figures is entirely secondary—not only from a quantitative standpoint but, more importantly, from the perspective of their compositional value. When compared with the centrality and robustness of the human figure in the works of his American 'masters,' this quality highlights a decisive shift in the different intentions that animate Raeben.

We could say that the pastel cycle represents a response to analytical Cubism and historical abstraction, not so much in a post-impressionist tone but in the form of a new blend between a visual source, on the one hand, and its imaginative and immediate recording on the other. The unexpected outcome is a "metropolitan magical realism" which had not yet been experimented with in Europe at that time and which the artist, at a certain point in his career, abandoned—perhaps because, in his mind, the fusion he had come to the root note.

Fig. 7. Norman Raeben, untitled [Paris city scene with metro, streetlights, and figures], 1932-1940s, private collection.

[1] The literature on Raeben's art and teachings is still relatively limited. Among the available studies see F. Fantuzzi, "Cenni di ermeneutica ebraica nelle teorie di Norman Raeben, figlio di Scholem Aleichem e maestro di Bob Dylan," in F. Fantuzzi, ed., *Tales of Unfulfilled Times. Saggi critici in onore di Dario Calimani offerti dai suoi allievi*, Venice, 2017, pp. 53-78; C. Schlam, *The Creative Path. A View From the Studio On the Making Of Art*, New York, 2018; the art section of A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Paintings, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, pp. 191-232; F. Fantuzzi, *"All the Way From New Orleans to New Jerusalem": Norman Raeben e Bob Dylan*, Ph.D. thesis, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Rome, 2020; and F. Fantuzzi, "Per un'arte emigrante tra Ashcan School e avanguardie parigine," in *De Pictura*, no. 4, October 2024, pp. 115-122.

More information is available in the bibliography on his influence on Bob Dylan, which includes especially A. Carrera, *La voce di Bob Dylan. Un racconto dell'America*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2011, pp. 296-310; S. Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, New York, 2011, pp. 137-139; F. Fantuzzi, "'No Time to Think': il tempo tra arte e canzone," in *L'Ulisse*, Vol. 26, 2023, pp. 237-251; and F. Fantuzzi, "Songwriting Tradition and the Interpretative Talent," in *Cahiers de littérature orale*, no. 94, 2023, pp. 31-54.

[2] A compendium of modern Vedutism on Venice can be found in: A. Bettagno, ed., *Venezia, da stato a mito*, Ex. Cat., (Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, August 30 - November 30), Venice, 1997.

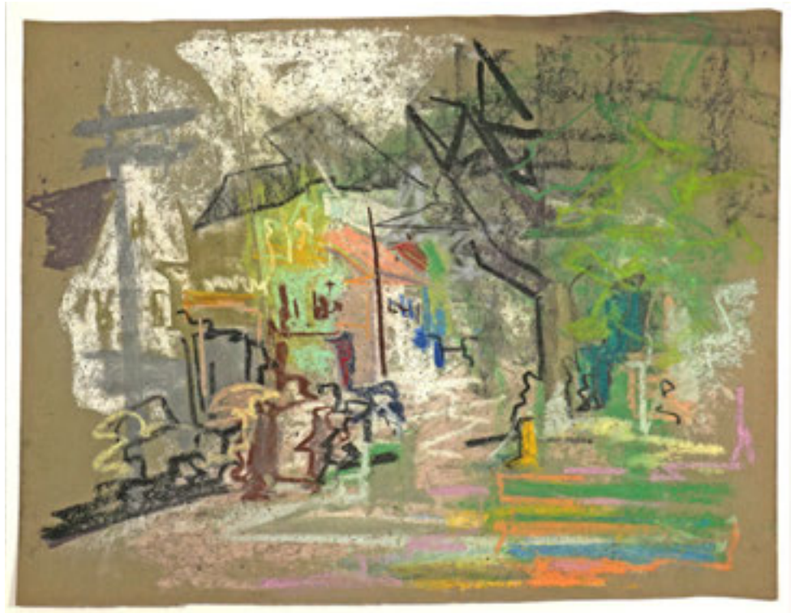


Fig. 8. Norman Raeben, B4.P.13, circa 1930s-1940s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Fig. 9. Norman Raeben, B.4.P.19, circa 1930s-1940s, Josh Raeben's collection.

Portraits of Wandering
An Artistic Journey from Sholem Aleichem to Bob Dylan

Fabio Fantuzzi

The renowned Yiddish-language writer Sholem Aleichem confronts the theme of the Yiddish world's dissolution from Eastern Europe and its rebirth in American soil in his final novel, *Mottl. The Adventure of the Cantor's Son*.[1] The book recounts the experience of migration through the eyes and voice of a child, Mottl, offering the reader an imaginative and estranged perspective. A budding artist, cunning, unscrupulous, and exquisitely ironic, the cantor's son is yet another figure of the wandering Jew, a child of and condemned to the diaspora. He is a final and, at the same time, new interpreter for a tradition obliged to be constantly reborn and renewed, compelled to find new forms and new languages for a culture that must preserve itself through continuous and forced evolution.

The book mirrors the journey undertaken by its author, who, like his characters, emigrated to the United States with his family to escape the pogroms of early twentieth-century Russia. The biographical references do not end there, however: as confirmed by the writer's family,[2] to create the character of Mottl, Sholem Aleichem was inspired by his youngest son, Numa. Mottl shares the same passion for painting and chess as did a young Raeben—also the son of a cantor, though one of a different kind.[3] The two also share a markedly transnational education, which led Raeben to speak seven languages fluently. Afflicted by tuberculosis, Sholem Aleichem could not finish the novel, leaving a blank page for his son to complete the story of a character so much like himself.

In the first section, *From Home to America*, Sholem Aleichem reveals much about Raeben's own childhood. In the second section, entitled *In America*, Aleichem seems to partly foreshadow what would be his son's own artistic experience. Even the ending, or, rather, the absence of an ending, given that the book remains unfinished, offers a valuable hint: Raeben's major works are also unfinished and in perpetual evolution, presenting themselves first and foremost as itinerant, open, and non-teleological works.

Even the portraits and human figures in Raeben's urban landscapes tell a story of wandering and offer insights into New York's artistic circles, often connected to the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe. As Raeben himself recounts in a 1931 interview, the first crucial influence on his painting was his father's: "When I was a kid, I drew only caricatures. Perhaps because of the influence of my father. […] My father liked my caricatures and showed them off to friends […] and tried to convince them that I inherited his sense of humor."[4] The artist's first subjects were soldiers and caricatures of people he encountered during his travels across Europe as a child. Only one of these drawings has survived and is now part of the artist's family's personal collection [Fig. 1]. The French title suggests that the sketch was made in Geneva during his early childhood. Despite its rudimentary nature, the drawing attests to Raeben's early artistic talents and holds significant historical value, enriching our understanding of his father's influence. None of the caricatures that young Numa drew, referenced in Sholem Aleichem writings, has ever been recovered. Those that have survived from later periods, however, also often tell stories of the diaspora. Notable among these is the caricature of the opera singer Seymour Osborne [Fig. 2], a collaborator and close friend of the painter, playfully titled *The Tragic Baritone*. An artist and esteemed teacher who also emigrated from present-day Ukraine, Osborne, like Raeben, played a significant role in the Broadway and Yiddish theater scenes. He served as a mentor to pupils such as George Rose, William Daniels, Fred Gwynne, and John Cullum, some of whom also studied with Raeben.[5] A curious composition of various caricatures of intellectuals within the two artists' circles [Fig. 3]—from Osborne's personal collection dat-

Fig. 1. Norman Raeben, untitled [childhood drawing with soldiers], 1910s, Josh Raeben's collection.
Fig. 2. Norman Raeben, *The Tragic Baritone* [caricature of Seymour Osborne], 1939, private collection.
Fig. 3. Norman Raeben, *Caricatures of Seymour and Anne Osborne, Norman Raeben, Paul Musikonsky and Michail Chekhov*, 1940s, private collection.

ing back to the 1940s—also deserves mention: besides Raeben, Seymour, and Anne Osborne, the scene includes portraits of Paul Musikonsky and Michail Chekhov.

Intellectuals and artists connected to Yiddish cultural circles, as well as Raeben's own relatives, are the predominant subjects of his oil portraits from the 1920s. The portrait of his father Sholem Aleichem, produced in 1926 for the tenth anniversary of the writer's death, and that of his mother Olga made slightly later (both currently preserved at the Beth Shalom Aleichem Museum in Tel Aviv), encapsulate the essential aspects of Raeben's early work [Figs. 4, 5]. In them, the influence of his studies at the Arts Students League between 1918 and 1924 is very evident. The distinctly realist approach and use of color align with the Ashcan School of Painting's poetics, particularly his mentors Robert Henri, George Luks, and John Sloan.

In contrast to the purity of color typical of American Impressionist artists and the exuberant colors of Fauvism, Neo-Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism that developed in France simultaneously, The Eight adopted a darker palette, explicitly inspired by the great European Realist painters—especially Rembrandt, Diego Velázquez, and Frans Hals. Although The Eight highlight contemporary themes, ethnic minorities, and subjects drawn from the urban proletariat more so than their contemporaries, their portraits also exhibit a certain academic formalism, which is particularly evident in their elaborate use of contrast, the way they play with light, and the poses of their subjects. These artistic choices are partly reflected in Raeben's early works: for example, Raeben also adopts an earthier palette and indulges in darker colors, applied by broad, generous, densely-layered brushstrokes in order to capture the humanity of his parents, both portrayed from the torso up. Particularly representative of this style is the portrait of Dr. Sherwin Kaufman, the artist's nephew and brother of writer Bel Kaufman (author of the famous novel *Up the Down Staircase*, who studied painting with Raeben and was also portrayed by the artist). The painting, completed in 1925 [Fig. 6], is emblematic of the philosophies of the period.

Fig. 4. Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Sholem Aleichem*, 1926, Beth Sholem Aleichem.

Fig. 5. Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Olga Rabinowitz*, late 1920s, Beth Sholem Aleichem.

A prime example is how Raeben captures the light and color contrast in the subject's white sleeves, pointing to an even more evident connection with the Flemish tradition. These same characteristics also define his other oil portraits, which feature numerous prominent figures in the artistic circles of the time. These often include intellectuals associated with New York's Yiddish theater who studied or collaborated with Raeben. For example, Raeben painted numerous members of the Adler family, including Pearl 'Polly', Diana, Mary, and, perhaps most famous, Stella. His collaboration with Stella was particularly fruitful and long-lasting: Stella studied painting with Raeben for several decades and drew upon his theories on the relationship between perception and imagination in her long and prestigious career as an acting teacher. Over the years, she regularly recommended her students take lessons with Raeben, who, in turn, portrayed her in at least three paintings, one of which is now housed at the Stella Adler Acting School in New York [Fig. 7].

Although many of the portraits have been lost, fortunately, an rudimentary early catalog commissioned by Raeben's son, which includes numerous Polaroids taken in the early 1980s, documents their existence. From this archive, we gain information about portraits of Broadway artists such as Alexandra Danilova and Dorothy Bird, as well as additional figures connected to Yiddish theater: Luba Harrington and Miriam Kressyn, and many other esteemed intellectuals and artists. This last group also includes the Russian-American painter and illustrator, Isador Steinberg—a close friend and collaborator of Raeben's, with whom he spent a painting period in Paris in the early 1930s—his wife Polly, also Raeben's student, and their son David Michael, who later pursued a career as a songwriter in the Greenwich Village folk scene under the name "Jimmy Randall."

Fig. 6. Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Sherwin Kaufman*, 1925, Kenneth Kaufman's collection.

Fig. 7. Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Stella Adler*, late 1930s-1940s, Stella Adler Studio of Acting.

In the early 1930s, partly due to the influence of the Parisian avant-garde movements that Raeben encountered first in 1925 and 1926 and later in 1932 and 1933, one can observe a gradual departure from realism. This evolution culminates in the artist's mature production, characterized by a quest for a synthesis between the itinerant and figurative approach of the *Eight* and the semi-abstract artistic languages of the School of Paris.[6] This marked a pivotal moment in his career, driven by a declared desire to create a clear break from his early work and his identity as an artist, leading to a separation from American Realism's artistic circles and a more complex and nuanced relationship with Jewish culture. It was during this period that the painter decided to change his name and began signing his works as Norman Raeben. An article from 1931 published in *The Sentinel* reveals that this decision was motivated by the desire to free himself from the constant comparison to his father and to give his persona a more international artistic identity. Excerpts from two interviews provide deeper insight into the painter's character and the nature of his artistic evolution. In a 1931 interview, for instance, when critic David Mann asked him why he seemed to lack of interest in subjects overtly connected to Jewish art, Raeben lost his composure:

> I confess my ignorance. Is an old Jew with his peissan and yarmelke, brushed on a canvas by a Frenchman, Jewish or French art? You tell me. I have never found out. Must a Jewish artist use kosher colors? If while walking in Jaffa, in Palestine, I see an Arab bazaar which with its multicolored contrasts makes my hand itch to put it on canvas, must I race to Tel Aviv and paint the Herzliah Gymnasium instead? […] Just as there is no Jewish style in world literature, so there is no Jewish art in painting.[7]

Even more ironic and succinct is the comment with which he responded to the same question in an interview published by the newspaper *Six-Thirteen* in 1976: "To call an artist a Jewish artist is ridiculous, unless he paints from right to left instead of from left to right."[8] However, as evidenced by his decision to adopt a stage name based on his surname, Raeben did not intend to deny his Jewishness.[9] Rather, his statements reveal a clear desire not to be solely confined or defined by his Jewish identity, especially as the son of one of the greatest Yiddish writers.

From a technical standpoint, this evolution primarily manifests itself through the adoption of pastels and sandpaper as Raeben's new preferred media. This drastic change highlights a desire to distance himself from traditional painting methods and their associated artistic traditions, and to create a new language characterized by a swift and profoundly musical stroke. This is also evident in his portraits and the demonstrative works he produced during his lessons. Watching the artist at work, particularly in the two documentaries dedicated to Realism and Post-Impressionism,[10] one can notice that Raeben generally begins by creating an abstract 'underpainting'. This pictorial context serves to reproduce the pure, unmediated perception of the subject at hand. Raeben refers to this 'underpainting' in his lessons alternately as 'air' or 'atmosphere:' without it, the painting loses the density, depth, and connection to reality that allows the subject to truly come to life.

Raeben views the creative process as an interpretive act that enables the artist to discover the painting within the painting, finding a more convincing balance between the need for form and sensory perception. There emerges within this process a desire to refine and bring forward reflections on the construction of and relationships within the painting, a dialog which was inaugurated by Cézanne and later taken up by several of his artistic heirs. In particular, some of Matisse's considerations on the subject come to mind:

> I am surprised to see, little by little, an image appear on the sheet, more or less precisely resembling the person with whom I am in contact. This image appears to me as if each stroke of charcoal has removed from a mirror the fog that until that moment had prevented me from seeing it.[11]

This evocative image particularly fits the charcoal head studies made by Raeben for demonstration purposes during his lessons, with some examples provided in the last section of the catalog.[12] Take, for instance, this head study [Fig. 8], which is of particular interest because of its inclusion of the themes addressed in the lesson alongside the portrait. In works like this, Raeben emphasizes for educational purposes the outcomes of the aforementioned constructive methodology: by layering numerous charcoal and pastel strokes, he creates the impression that the subject emerges from the painting itself, infusing it with a deep sense of vitality and an uncommon degree of expressiveness. Due to the nature of the medium, this effect is more subdued and balanced in pastel portraits, a technique Raeben employed more extensively from the mid-1930s onward. He refined its

use through a combination of dry and wet pastel, which he sometimes blended with his bare hand.

For example, in the 1955 *Portrait of Anne Osborne* [Fig. 9], one can observe how Raeben achieves greater depth and density in his brushstroke, resulting in notably unified outcomes. Other typical characteristics of his pastel work can also be discerned: in portraiture, there are strong Cézannian influences in the use of outlines and color. His swift, musical stroke and the exuberant, at times almost seemingly arbitrary, use of color reflect the need to capture the spontaneous and ephemeral impression of the subject. Building further upon Cézanne, Raeben imparts greater solidity and dynamism to his figures by employing darker colors, rejected by Impressionists. In particular, these colors are used for creating multiple outlines that compel the eye to continuously move from one detail to another. To borrow from philosopher Merleau-Ponty about Cézanne, Raeben thus aims "to give the impression of an emerging order, of an object that is appearing, coalescing under our eyes."[13]

Equally interesting are the results of this experiment employed in pastel cityscapes, which show a direct link to Ashcan School aesthetics. Consistent with his early mentors, Raeben adopted an itinerant painter's approach, or, rather, one of a "mobile observer," to use a felicitous term coined by Rebecca Zurier.[14] This mobile attitude is related to two different traditions—the esthetic traveler and the chronicler—finding a fusion in the movement of early twentiweth-century American Realism. Like those painted by The Eight, Raeben's cityscapes present themselves as spontaneous happenings. Their creator is an observer at the same time intimately connected to the reality he represents yet never entirely a part of it.

However, in these pastels, there is little trace of the other stylistic peculiarities of Ashcan paintings. The depiction of the working class's daily life is entirely absent. The subjects traditionally depicted within the Ashcan school also often adhere to representational conventions prevalent in the media of the time, such as the cartoonish rendering that George Luks and George Bellows borrow

Fig. 8. Norman Raeben, *Plane, Impasto, Psyche* [study of the head], early 1970s, private collection.

Fig. 9. Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Anne Osborne*, 1955, private collection.

from comics and humorous magazines, employing the entire graphic vocabulary—grotesque exaggerations, crude distortions, and quick sketch-like strokes—to convey both the allure and the repulsion of New York's multicultural streets. In other cases, the stereotyping of lower classes reflects a politically inclusive ideal with Whitmanian echoes. This is evident, for instance, in Robert Henri's bustling New York, full of workers and immigrants. This second category also includes William Glackens's indulgence in clichés and conventional strokes and traits to give voice to European immigrants, especially the Jewish communities of the Lower East Side. These themes and their formal conventions are entirely absent in Raeben's paintings, which seem impervious also to the appeal of nationalistic exaltation.[15]

From a technical perspective, Raeben draws more from his Parisian experiences in search of a way to integrate the concrete and abstract, imagination and perception, within the semi-abstract world of his canvases. Thus, his New York, instead of resembling the industrious city of The Eight, seems rather to echo the impressions of the Big Apple that Henry James conveyed in *The American Scene*: "It breathed its simple 'New York! New York!' at every impulse of inquiry; so that I can only echo contentedly, with analysis for once quite agreeably baffled, 'Remarkable, unspeakable New York!'."[16]

This endeavor also extends to his portrayal of human figures, perhaps the most characteristic aspect of his mature works and the most revealing of his experience as an immigrant and itinerant artist, which can be seen in the large section devoted to his cityscapes and landscapes in this catalog. Drawing from the reflections of Braque and Picasso on the subject, Raeben developed the conviction that the presence of a strong subject tends, in most cases, to create imbalance within the canvas' internal relationships. This is even more apparent when dealing with human subjects, which he considered the most difficult to integrate within the context of a painting. However, like the two masters before him, Raeben never opted for their complete abolition. In his pastels, the answer to this dilemma lies instead in rendering subjects as vibrant and evanescent voices. Raeben sketches them rapidly as buzzing, vague, and ephemeral shapes that populate an ineffable, chaotic urban landscape. In this way, his human figures blend in with the background in an even more convincing manner. At the same time, they are never completely part of it, as their transience and incompleteness create constant movement within the internal relationships of the painting. What is even more astounding is that, through a minimalistically-executed stroke, Raeben reduces the subjects almost to mere vibrations of sound, achieving the paradoxical result of capturing their deepest essence—their sound, their voice. A keen observer cannot miss how strongly Raeben's cultural roots and life experience emerge here. As in most works by Jewish avant-garde post-impressionist artists, there is no trace of elements directly linked to Jewish iconography in these pastels.[17] The trace, however, is found in these aniconic, rapidly sketched human forms, perpetually intent on affirming their existence and constantly on the verge of disappearing. The essence of these characters thus brings us back to the themes from which this investigation began: fragile and precarious, yet deeply tenacious, these voices are intrinsically linked to the paradigm of wandering.

Several distinguished artists have embraced and advanced these artistic paradigms, interpreting them in their own disciplines in various ways. This catalog provides a noteworthy example through the direct testimony contained in the essay by Roz Jacobs, co-creator of the Memory Project (alongside Laurie Weisman). However, it is impossible not to mention the influence of Raeben on one of his most famous students, Bob Dylan, who attended Raeben's studio for several months in the spring of 1974. As a descendant of Jews who fled Eastern Europe like many of Raeben's students, Dylanwas drawn to the teacher's studio not only by a fascination for the world of painting but also by the desire to deepen his understanding of his cultural heritage. As Dylan himself explained to journalist Jonathan Cott, Raeben "taught me how to see. He put my mind and my hand and my eye together in a way that allowed me to do consciously what I unconsciously felt."[18] In the years immediately following the lessons, Dylan composed three of his most critically acclaimed albums, *Blood on the Tracks*, *Desire*, and *Street Legal*, and made his directorial debut with the film *Renaldo and Clara*. In a 1991 interview, referring to this trilogy, Dylan explained: "that was my painting period […] that's like taking a brush, you know, and painting those songs onto a canvas. They're all painted, that's what they are."[19] The elements of Raeben's theories translated by Dylan into music and his film

are numerous and complex and have recently been the subject of various studies.

Among the aspects that most capture Dylan's attention are the theories on the representation of time and subjects in art, which he explicitly transposed through an experimental use of masks and personal pronouns.[20] Dylan discussed his artistic intentions in various interviews. The first album of the trilogy opens with the manifesto song *Tangled Up in Blue*, about which the artist explained: "I wanted to defy time, so that the story took place in the present and past at the same time. When you look at a painting, you can see any part of it or see all of it together."[21] Dylan pursues this artistic ideal by fragmenting and juxtaposing different plots through a markedly expressionist use of personal pronouns. Shifting from the first to the third person and vice versa, sometimes within the same verse, the lyrics make it impossible to establish solid relationships between characters and their stories. The diegetic linearity and temporal sequence of events are replaced by a metonymic juxtaposition of image chains derived from the pictorial text:

> I was just trying to make it like a painting where you can see the different parts but then you also see the whole of it. [It has to do with] the way the characters change from the first person to the third person, and you're never quite sure if the third person is talking or the first person is talking. But as you look at the whole thing, it really doesn't matter.[22]

Like the figures in Raeben's pastels, the protagonists of these albums' narrative songs are reduced to ineffable presences that appear as voices of a continually evolving piece: they are details of a larger whole, compelled to contribute to the unending dialogue of a perpetually evolving work.

Raeben, in turn, painted a portrait of Dylan, now preserved at the Bob Dylan Center in Tulsa. Entitled *The Poet with No Hands* [Fig. 10], the oil painting also tells an intriguing story: according to various students, it is a demonstrative work that Raeben created a few days before the singer-songwriter's arrival, which, by a curious coincidence, closely resembles Dylan.

Throughout his long career, Raeben had hundreds of students, some lesser-known and others very famous, many of whom pursued careers in different fields, such as the previously mentioned actresses Stella, Mary, and Polly Adler, the photographer Bill Cunningham, the director Bill Fertik, the theater director and lyricist Jacques Levy, or world-renowned musicians like Bob Haggart, Steve Postels, and Bob Dylan, to name just a few. All these artists, as well as Raeben's lesser-known students, have a story to tell that deserves to be investigated and recounted. Many of them also own paintings and portraits created by Raeben that could not be included here. The many pieces of the puzzle formed by these portraits and artistic connections thus create a broader story, a story of wandering that continues to offer valuable insights into New York's artistic circles and their evolution.[23] In other words, a story that completes the second part of Mottl's novel that Sholem Aleichem could not write. With his paintings and teachings, his son has, in his own way, completed the tale for him.

Fig. 10. Norman Raeben, *The Poet with No Hands* [portrait of Bob Dylan], 1974, Bob Dylan Center, American Song Archives.

[1] Sholem Aleichem, *Adventures of Mottel the Cantor's Son*, translated by Tamara Kahana, New York, 1953.

[2] The information derives from an interview with Bert Waife, artist and great-grandson of Sholem Aleichem.

[3] As also noted in Raeben's obituary, there is a famous interview in which Sholem Aleichem stated that the first thing he would have done if he had become rich would have been to give his son a gold chessboard ("Norman Raeben, 77; Last Surviving Son of Sholom Aleichem," in *New York Times*, December 13, 1978, p. 25).

[4] D. Mann, "Portrait of an Artist," in *The Sentinel*, April 10, 1931, p. 7.

[5] "Seymour Osborne, Theatrical Voice Coach, 93," in *The New York Times*, August 19, 1996, p. 12.

[6] Nico Stringa holds this view, writing: "We might say that Raeben demonstrated an ability to develop an artistic language compatible with both European visual culture and American visual culture, due to the level of interaction he expressed between fidelity to the visual context on one hand and the autonomy of form and color on the other" (N. Stringa, *Norman Raeben: A Compatible Modernity*, in A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Paintings, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, p. 207).

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] "A Jew in the Loft," in *Six-Thirteen*, no. 1, February 1976, pp. 53-56.

[9] Raeben remained a key figure in Yiddish cultural circles throughout his career, to the extent that Dorothy Bird, a student of both Raeben and Stella Adler, states in her autobiography that in 1949 she was the only student who did not speak Yiddish (D. Bird and J. Greenberg, *Bird's Eye View: Dancing with Martha Graham and on Broadway*, Pittsburgh, 1997, p. 231).

[10] N. Raeben, *Realism: An Introduction to Observation*, directed by Bill and Robin Fertik, starring Norman Raeben, Doubleday, 1972, and Norman Raeben, *The Eye and the Realism*, directed by Bill and Robin Fertik, starring Norman Raeben, Doubleday, 1972.

[11] H. Matisse, *Scritti e pensieri sull'arte*, ed. by D. Fourcade, Milan, 2003, p. 141. My translation.

[12] For further exploration, see Roz Jacobs' essay, which dedicates a reflection to these studies in this section.

[13] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Senso e non senso*, Milan, 2016, p. 33. My translation.

[14] R. Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2006, p. 86.

[15] See, in this regard, R. Henri, "'My People': By Robert Henri," in *The Craftsman*, XXVII, no. 5, February 1915, pp. 459-469, and R. Henri, "What about Art in America?," in *Arts and Decoration*, XXIV, November 1925, pp. 35-37 and 75.

[16] H. James, *The American Scene*, New York-London, 1907, p. 201.

[17] Though this is a common trait in the art of the School of Paris, there are various notable exceptions, including El Lissitzky, Marc Chagall, Nathan Altman, and Issachar Ryback, among others, and several scholars have greatly enriched this field of research. Among the many contributions, see especially S. Baskind, L. Silver, "Looking Jewish: The State of Research on Modern Jewish Art," in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 101, no. 4, 2011, pp. 631-652; S. Baskind and L. Silver, *Jewish Art: A Modern History*, London, 2011 and N. Nieszawer *et alii*, *Artistes Juifs de l'École de Paris 1905-1939*, Paris, 2015.

[18] B. Dylan, *Bob Dylan: The Essential Interviews*, ed. by J. Cott, New York, 2006, p. 260.

[19] B. Dylan, *Every Mind Polluting Word: Assorted Bob Dylan Utterances: A Collection of Speeches, Interviews, Press Conferences, etc.*, ed. by A. Jarosinski, Don't Ya Tell Henry Publications, 2006, p. 1096: https://archive.org/details/every-mind-polluting-word-2nd-edition. Accessed on September 4, 2024.

[20] For further details, see A. Carrera, *La voce di Bob Dylan. Un racconto dell'America*, Milan, Feltrinelli 2011, pp. 296-310; F. Fantuzzi, "Painting Songs, Composing Paintings: Norman Raeben and Bob Dylan," in A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Paintings, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, pp. 224-225; and F. Fantuzzi, "No Time to Think: Il tempo tra arte e canzone," in *L'Ulisse*, Vol. 26, 2023, pp. 237-251.

[21] B. Flanagan, *Written in My Soul: Conversation with Rock's Great Songwriters: Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Chuck Berry, Elvis Costello, Joni Mitchell, Mick Jagger, Paul Simon, Sting, Pete Townshend, Bono, Van Morrison and 18 others*, Chicago, 1987, p. 95.

[22] B. Cartwright, *The Mysterious Norman Raeben*, in J. Bauldie, ed., *Wanted Man: In Search of Bob Dylan*, New York, 1991, p. 89.

[23] For further exploration, see F. Fantuzzi, "Songwriting Tradition and the Interpretive Talent," in *Cahiers de littérature orale*, 94, 2023, pp. 31-54.

Norman Raeben: Art Telescopes Time

Roz Jacobs

In 1973 when I met Norman Raeben, I was a 17-year-old art student. I had just finished my first year of university and met some art students who were raving about their "amazing" teacher Norman. I skeptically walked into his studio to take a class and to see for myself. I met Norman and he rocked my world.

When I knocked on the door of Norman Raeben's Carnegie Hall studio he greeted me at the doorway with a friendly hello. "Hi. What's your name? How do you spell that? Rosalyn? Wait, spell it slowly I have to visualize the letters, R-O-S-A… I have to see it." As he repeated the letters slowly, as if caressing each one he began his lesson on the visual and the verbal. He talked about being able to see or visualize and make tangible with all of your senses what is before you—unwrapping the symbol to experience what is. For example: When you hear the word apple your mind immediately knows what it is. But think about how a baby experiences an apple before knowing what it is—she immediately touches it, turns it over, puts it into her mouth, feels, tastes, smells, sees it—,it's round, hard, red, sweet. She uses all of her senses to discover it and eventually learns the word… apple. Lesson #1: the significance and distinction between the visual and the verbal—and we were only at the entrance hallway of his studio. Then it was straight to the easel to work. I realized immediately that I had met my teacher. I dropped everything and began to study with Norman 6 days a week for 6 years, until the day he died.

Norman Raeben, born in 1900, was the youngest son of Solomon and Olga Rabinowitz. Olga was a dentist who often supported the family, while her husband wrote humorous and often bittersweet stories about Jewish life in the small towns of eastern Europe. His father wrote under the pen name Sholom Alechem and became a well-known and much-loved Yiddish writer whose stories inspired the musical *Fiddler on the Roof.* As a child Norman was a chess prodigy. At the same time, he could barely read and failed many of his classes. The early realization and acceptance that there was both a genius and an idiot within himself became a cornerstone of Norman's later teachings. Each day that I studied with him was like being in a master class.

As his student, I experienced Norman's praise which was wonderful and his criticism which could be devastating. At different times, he would pronounce you either an idiot or a genius. I soon learned that it was not to be taken as an attack or praise but as a way to distinguish what was genuine in your work and what hit a false note. You learned to distinguish for yourself your internal process and to identify when you have complete presence in your creative process or are distracted. It was in fact neither flattery nor derision (though it could feel that way) but a tool for self-knowledge. His methodology constantly challenged us to see beyond what we knew. Norman taught his students to accept that we were *both* geniuses and idiots, so we were free to try anything and everything—to triumph sometimes, to fail dismally other times and to extract lessons from it all. He inspired us with the ideas of others including his own teacher Robert Henri who said: "The object isn't to make art, it's to be in that wonderful state which makes art inevitable."

In his little studio above Carnegie Hall, where the floors were full of artists of all kinds, Norman taught anywhere from three to fifteen students. Some of us spent the entire day, five or six days a week for many years, studying with him. His emphasis was that "feeling is the core of art," as opposed to the notion that concepts and ideas are the core. In Norman's studio the "percept preceded and took precedence over the concept." That is not to say that we avoided the concept or abstraction. In our training,

abstraction was an integral part of the creative process, but perception was the springboard for the imagination. By perception I mean experiencing the world through a co-mingling of our senses, mind and heart.

When Norman distinguished between the visual and the tactile he quoted George Braque who said, "If you cannot touch my painting I failed." Norman explained it this way, "He means touch with your eye. The eye touches as it looks. The heart feels, the brain works and the imagination drives as that great power within—the power of fantasy, the power of beauty begins—and art is made."

It is hard to describe Norman's teaching methodology because his knowledge was so profound, his thinking so unique, and his urgency to share it so intense. You had to work hard at the easel, integrating his voluminous teaching into the work that you were doing. He saw whether you were understanding him by what you were "saying" in your painting or drawing. He read your painting. He could smell authenticity. He could see falsehood. He had the ability to impart that knowledge to you, so that the willing student could learn to trust their own intuition and read their own painting and process. Norman taught us to differentiate between what was utilitarian within us and what was poetic. He spoke of a kind of hide and seek between the material and the immaterial, between the real and the spiritual to achieve a complete or aesthetic experience.

In Norman's studio we painted with oil paint. The subjects included: still life, seated figure, and the head. We drew figures using large vine charcoal and worked in soft pastels as well. When drawing figures, the models were always on a mat on the floor rather than at eye-level, which was more typical in art classes. Looking down at the model enabled the student to see the figure in space. The message was that space is as important as form. The relationship between the space and form was enhanced by seeing the subject from the student's perspective above. This was the same with the still life setup. We were encouraged to learn the relative importance of the objects to each other and to our self and to explore not only what the eye sees but what the image is telling us—what must be ignored, what must be emphasized. It might induce smokiness in one part of the canvas and opacity in another—different types of tactile realities understood in space.

While teaching and demonstrating on a canvas, the particular gray of a chair might trigger a memory from his childhood. He would try to paint the feeling of what that gray evoked rather than the local color of that chair. That might trigger a reference to *Remembrance of Things Past* with its unfurling of Proust's memory while madeleine crumbs and tea mixed in his mouth. Or, if Norman was drawing a still life in charcoal and made vertical and diagonal lines in space that represented an asymmetrical scaffolding for the objects to eventually be discovered in, he might bring up Matisse who spoke about verticals connecting us to gravity while building his arabesques around them. This, in turn might lead to a discourse linking Newton's insight in connecting an apple falling to the earth in a perpendicular line with the phenomenon of gravity to Einstein's theory of relativity. For Norman, the artist was both architect and musician navigating the dynamic forces in life. His teaching methodology was a dynamic force of changing ideas inspired by what he was seeing and thinking in that moment.

Those days in the early 1970s, heading from Norman's studio to my East Village railroad flat, I frequented many second-hand bookstores picking up books Norman had referenced in class: Proust, Koestler, Bergson, Tolstoy, Einstein… to try to better grasp some of what Norman had relayed that day. He imparted a kind of kaleidoscopic knowledge that induced research, in-depth reading and connect-ability.

Norman's ability to transport us to another time was partly due to his absolute presence while painting. He used to say "Art telescopes time." The past and the future are in the present moment in which art is created. As his student I learned how to "enter" the page as if it were infinite in space and time. I didn't feel like I was drawing on top of a piece of paper. Instead, I had the sense that the paper was space and while I was drawing, the subject would arrive out of that space. It was not paper. It was a universe that was alive—and full of darkness and light, wonder and possibilities. We were not only painters but choreographers, musicians, connected to those before us and to the lineage of philosophers who search for meaning. He taught us that connect-ability was a kind of elasticity of thinking—that neural pathways could be sparked in unexpected ways during the creative process. Each day, while demonstrating in innumerable ways how, in his words, "light, movement and texture create shape in space," he simultaneously externalized his inner dialogue, unpacking the painting process while making connections to other artists or thinkers.

He and his partner Vicki were writing a book along with a fellow student Diana Postel. I occasionally transcribed some tapes for them and found notes on one chapter—Chapter 7. It opened like this:

> In our dreams at night we move on the tide of our emotions. We are musicians. Creatures of pure subjectivity. We fantasize. When we open our eyes we become architects. We build the structure of the objective world. Between these two states there is a never-never land of tremendous flux. When we are not yet awake and no longer asleep. When the musician changes places with the architect.
>
> When the architect went to sleep and the musician had full sway, the builder in us was non-existent. We could dream. As the architect is about to open his eyes to the law of gravity, and the bed seems to fall down as he springs up, the musician hides from the full face of daylight. Playing his tunes covertly. While the architect moves about and acts. We are back in the world again dragging our musical case, unconsciously, in secret from ourselves.[1]

Each morning, I cleaned Norman's studio in exchange for classes. He would arrive before the students did with a notebook full of his morning writings and his head full of new ideas, and ask whether I would like to hear what he had written. I always did. What he read aloud was raw but fascinating. It was a privilege to hear. I would have to get to the studio earlier and earlier to find time to clean. One day while cleaning, I noticed a pile of portfolios covered with dust and hidden way up on a high shelf. I asked him what it was and he said "Oh nothing." When I persisted, he said that it was some of his old work—pastels. Down they came. We looked at them together with a few other students who had walked in. We were all taken with these beautiful pastels done decades earlier by a younger Norman. He captured life in New York City, Provincetown, Paris—constructing with the analysis of planes, light and texture, shapes full of the exuberance of the cityscapes that he was expressing.

These pastels on a rough sand paper surface brought out the solidity and fluidity of his subjects with great sensitivity to form, light and texture—whether the subject was a Citroën "deux chevaux" in front of a Paris Metro, crowds in front of the Flatiron Building in New York, or the theater marquees of Times Square. His work was teeming with life, light and air. He often spoke of air in his work. Air, not as atmosphere but as a substance both real and imagined that convincingly brought you into the life of a place so that you could feel alive there, live and breathe there. Norman was never literal. He was soulful.

We were so excited to see and unravel these fragile pastels preserved under glassine layers. I eventually borrowed a car and drove the portfolios to his apartment where he put them under his bed and never bothered with them again. After Norman's death, his son Jay hired me to have the work photographed and properly matted. I also tracked down some of the artwork that he had sold over the years. I was able to locate an oil portrait of Stella Adler who was his friend and various other paintings and pastels included in this exhibition. But the pastels that we discovered hidden away on the top shelf of his studio were gems from a bygone era that have remained etched in my memory.

Another morning after I succeeded in cleaning the studio because he hadn't come in yet, Norman entered and Diana soon followed. Norman suddenly, and uncharacteristically launched into a premonition he was having right then and there. He looked at me almost mystically and said "[…] I'm seeing something about you—It's in the future. You'll always be painting, but you're going to be doing something different, something very important. I don't know what it is and it will involve painting but also some other media[…] film and something we don't know about yet[…]." Then just as suddenly as he had launched into that premonition, he kind of snapped out of it as if it had been a spell that had broken and he went on with his day. Diana and I exchanged looks and went on as well.

Twenty-seven years later I began an endeavor that indeed echoed Norman's premonition. It began with an idea I had for an art installation. When people look at a painting they see the end result but not the time nor the stages that the painting is made up of. I wanted to reveal the process of inspiration and desperation and everything in between by videotaping myself painting so that viewers could see the painting and an edited video of the painting process side by side. While pondering this idea of an installation I had a vision of my own. I saw the installation idea magni-

fied into multiple paintings and videos. The subject went from still life to a portrait of my mother's brother, my uncle Kalman, a teenager killed during the Holocaust in Poland. My wife, Laurie Weisman, and I had been videotaping my family and community of Holocaust survivors for decades knowing that their testimony and life force was something important to capture. We weren't sure what to do with the footage but knew we had to document it. I had also been writing a lot on the subject of the Holocaust. This installation became an opportunity to pull these strands of my life's work together.

While painting the head of Kalman over and over again nine times for this installation, I thought a lot about Norman and the lessons he taught about the structure of the head, how the light moved the form and how the person would emerge from the movement of the strokes of paint. Laurie came from the world of education, children's television and multi-media. Together we created the installation and then formed a non-profit organization called The Memory Project Productions. Over the last 20 years we have created exhibitions, documentaries, and a book. The most recent piece is a traveling exhibit called "Messages from Survivors" which includes videos available through QR codes and digital paintings that I made on my iPad that illustrate my family's experiences during the Holocaust. These are, indeed, technologies that did not exist when Norman made his odd prediction about my work.

Another major piece of our work is based on a pastel lesson in black and white that Norman taught. It began with a black and white photo of a person's head. Then we'd cover a piece of paper using vine charcoal and continue using black and white pastels to express the movement of light and shadow. I created a lesson similar to Norman's—providing black and white photos of people who lived, were killed or helped people survive the Holocaust. In addition I ask students to look at the photo upside down so that they don't copy and "make a picture" but concentrate on the movement of the light and shadow—which requires observation thus always ensures a better outcome. We conduct this lesson in workshops to people of all ages in many countries and the lesson is available online: https://memoryprojectproductions.com/

In addition to sharing our family history before, during and after the Holocaust we encourage participants to bring in black and white photos of someone in their family circle and interview them about a life changing experience. The participants then do a portrait of the person they interviewed using the same technique and share their portraits and stories with the others. The results are astounding as people learn about their own lineage and about each others, and learn that we are all a real part of history and making it together.

Laurie Weisman's conclusion in an article she wrote called: *How a Russian Emigré I Never Met Changed My Life*, is one example of Norman's enduring influence:

> Through the remarkable chain of events, Norman Raeben, a Russian-born painter, who died in 1978, inspired Roz, then me, and now thousands of people around the world. His teaching brought other great thinkers and artists into the room. So, in a way, he opened the door so that the whole world could become your mentor. His legacy is helping us to use "connectability" to make links between art, history, memory, and language arts. It's helping create communication across generations and cultural divides as students learn and share historical stories as well as their own. We display the thousands of portraits that kids around the world have made on an interactive website—fulfilling Norman's prescient vision that Roz would work in some new medium. And we honor her parents' legacy of love by telling their stories and cultivating creativity and compassion so that their dream of "Never again" can become a reality.[2]

In recent years, before Diana Postel passed away, she and I got together and recalled that early morning in Norman's studio. We marveled at his premonition so many decades earlier in light of The Memory Project Productions.

One more essential thing to know about Norman is that he inherited his father's sense of humor. Along with the serious study, laughter was present in our studio. Norman didn't tell jokes but he saw the humor in life and had the sense to express it at just the right time. Usually you laughed because what he said was so true that laughter was the only choice. One time a journalist from a Jewish magazine interviewed Norman seeking to highlight his connection to Judaism. She asked him about being a Jewish artist and Norman answered "Oh… A Jewish artist? You mean someone who paints from right to left?" She didn't appreciate his sense of humor. Anyone trying to pigeon-hole Norman will miss the point. He was forever evolving, imaginative and challenging. I'm sure that everyone who ever met Norman will have a unique story to tell. He was so much to so many and each story told, each work of art will shed some light on the many facets of his life and influence.

Norman believed that the artist is transformed by the creative act—that it forces the artist to resurrect his or her entire past experience in life, waking up memories that would otherwise lie fallow. That while creating art you feel a timeless resonance—a time space continuum that goes beyond the third dimension. He said, "Paintings, drawings, and sculptures are only byproducts, not the experience itself. And yet, the experience is so powerful that even those who look at a work of art can be illuminated by it. It may even activate their conscience. Humanize. Art is a blueprint for life."

[1] The passage comes from the notes for the unpublished book *Behind the Veil*, which was never finished. We thank Josh Raeben for granting permission to reproduce it.

[2] L. Weisman, "How a Russian Emigré I Never Met Changed My Life," in *NYSATA News*, digital edition, Vol. 48, No. 3, Winter 2019, p. 29.

Roz Jacobs, In Norman's Studio, 2024, digital art created using Procreate, link to video (2 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JDVu2I5Ng4&feature=youtu.be&themeRefresh=1

Maintenance and Conservative Restoration Process Diagnostics and Study of Materials

Antonella Martinato

The restoration of numerous works by the New York artist Norman Raeben engaged the team at the Artemisia Restauro laboratory for several months. The artworks arrived quarterly, giving us time to effectively divide the various operations of study, diagnostics, and conservation of the paintings and drawings. The maintenance and conservation project spanned nearly a year and involved more than fifty works of art in various media: oil, pastel, charcoal, and watercolor. Initially, we carefully analyzed the status and condition of all the works that arrived at the laboratory in order to understand the materials and the many techniques used by this versatile artist. The investigation immediately revealed that Raeben loved experimenting by using unusual base materials to achieve a particular texture or refractive effects. For the pastel technique, the artist used large sheets of sandpaper and beige velour paper as a base layer. He also used thin modeling sheets for creating some of the charcoal drawings. Some important pieces in the collection, mostly drawings, had been exposed to a fire and its aftereffects—including the ramifications of its being extinguished—presumably in the 1930s. Due to the flames, the paintings arrived at the laboratory in poor condition, covered by a thick layer of soot and saturated with severe moisture.

Fig.1. Scalpel removal of glue stains and residuals from pencil and ink drawings.

All these drawings, “mounted” on poorly made passe-partouts, were stuck to the underlying cardboard with wide strips of passe-partout tape—an adhesive medium used in the art field up to the 1970s to mount paintings to passe-partouts—or with cardboard supports. Through a long and delicate process, we managed to restore the pH levels of the base material and clean the surface of the beautiful drawings using scalpels to remove the layer of smoke damage. Some of the artworks showed cracking and significant breaks around the edges. These issues were addressed using a calibrated heat-based restoration and pressure-modulated swabs. The filling of the cuts and tears was carried out with the insertion of rice paper and tylose glue in dilution.

Numerous stains of various natures were also found, along with color-fade and, at times, serious stains composed of organic materials (such as coffee), which required the use of special surfactants in suspension applied by compresses. The greatest difficulties were encountered in the beautiful pastels on sandpaper. This technique, as is well known, works best with materials that have rough surfaces, which are capable of providing a better response to and absorption of the pastel. To meet these needs, Rae-

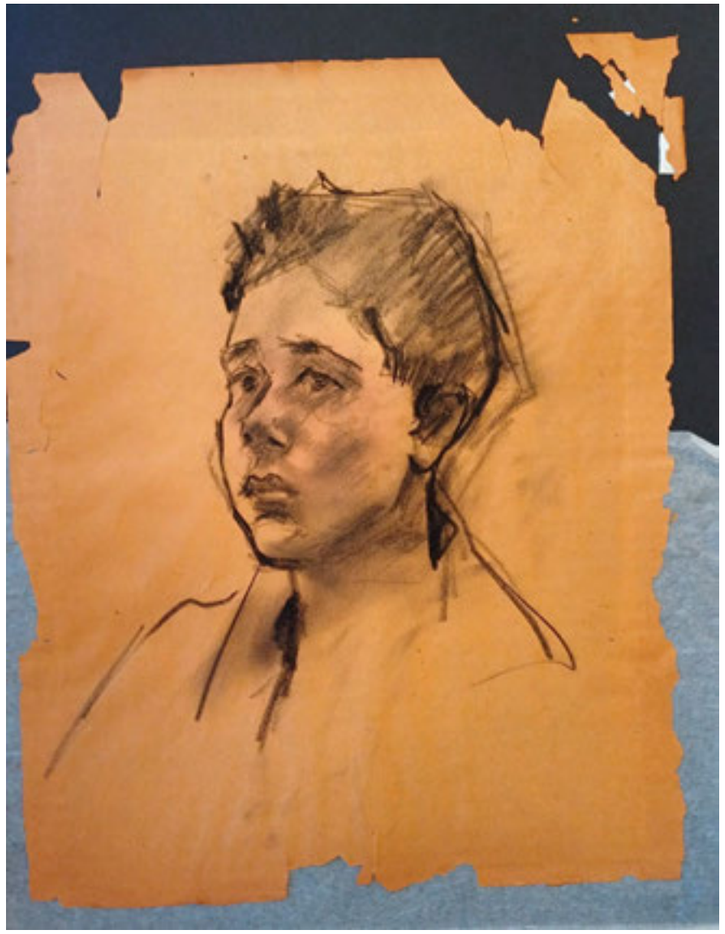


Fig. 2. State of conservation of charcoal on paper with relevant losses to the paper.

Fig. 3. Detail of a pastel drawing on sandpaper.

ben mainly used relatively coarse-grained sandpaper, often cut quickly and roughly. In some cases, he chose Danish sandpaper from the early 1930s, originally sold for sharpening razors—a choice that was even more unusual, but which was also motivated by the desire to allow the pastel to release more "material" onto the sheet, thus creating a very dynamic three-dimensional effect.
Unfortunately, however, during the restoration phase, this particular technique created many problems, because we had to reinforce even the "glass-like grains" of the sandpaper. As the material was produced in the 1950s, its integrity and retention of color was significantly compromised. Fortunately, after several attempts, the Artemisia team managed to restore even these works to their original vibrancy. A conservative restoration approach was chosen not only for the paintings: frames and glass were maintained and treated before being reassembled with the works to which they belonged. All pastels, drawings, and charcoals were treated with a final protective coating for proper conservation in dry places free from thermal and light stress.
The oil-painted canvases presented issues of tension and deterioration within the paint itself. Those with a very impasto texture (thick paint strokes) also had significant color loss. Others showed areas of superficial mold, especially in the darker tones, a phenomenon likely attributable to either the nature of the organic binder, the medium used to mix the paint, or possibly to prolonged exposure to a high-humidity environment with poor lighting. During the initial study phase, preliminary tests were carefully conducted on

Fig. 4. Leveling of the paper's deformations with thermocautery.

Fig. 5. Detail of the consolidation phase of consistent liftings of the paint layers with injections of an acryll33 solution.

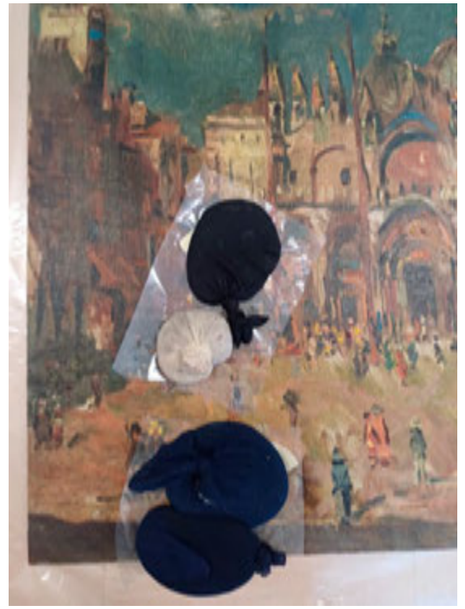


Fig. 6. Leveling of canvas liftings on a Masonite medium.

Fig. 7. Steam biocide treatment with swab to remove mold spores from dark sections of the paint surface.

Fig. 8. Detail of losses and rips of an oil on canvas medium.

Fig. 9. Side by side photos of smoke residue removal from an oil painting view of Provincetown.

Fig. 10. Gel suspension cleaning on an oil painting.
Fig. 11. Detail of a signature marked into paint surface.

each work, including digital microscopic investigation and observations under raking and infrared light. Each canvas was treated with care and attention during the restoration stages, from targeted cleaning to the restoration of the material and the paint layer. In some cases, it was also necessary to restore the three-dimensional and chromatic elements of some areas that had been lost.

Most likely due to the lack of a stretcher, some of the canvases had been glued in the past onto inappropriate supporting structures, such as fiberboard or cardboard. This exacerbated the issues of lifting and resulted in further loss of the paint film, forcing us to carry out a significant and delicate intervention to remove the unsuitable auxiliary mounts and to create perimeter strips in canvas to support a new mounting on a stretcher. We correctly tensioned these works, after first reinforcing the base layer, the primed layer, and the paint film. With these particular paintings, there were many visible gaps within the paint film, which we restored with full respect for the original iconographic integrity.

Due to the state of the works, the fixatives and varnishes applied by the artist were barely detectable. At the end of the conservation phases, we formulated and sprayed a light protective coating on the paintings, calibrated for each piece based on an analysis of various anticipated factors. Some canvases arrived without a stretcher, while others had lost parts of their frames, making it necessary to produce new expandable stretchers. For mounting the canvases on new or restored stretchers, we produced perimeter strips in *velo di Lione* to be glued onto the original canvas using a thermoplastic resin, to enable fastening to the supporting stretcher using aluminum staples.

All the methodologies used were developed through a project and an execution plan that took into account the original materials and the stylistic choices of the artist. The interventions are reversible and integrable over time and ensure maximum preservation in suitable environments for all the works involved in this project.

The dialogue with the curator was constant and active: Professor Fantuzzi's support helped the team in its consideration and the methodological approach to the restoration, offering valuable information about the artist's career and the provenance, history, and conservation of the works. The opportunity to work on these contemporary pieces certainly enriched our professional experience: the restoration project, with its complex character and numerous points of interest, demanded all our professionalism and commitment, testing us and providing a fantastic experience of research and work for the entire laboratory.

68 Paintings and Drawings

edited by Fabio Fantuzzi

Note to the catalog

Norman Raeben never provided indications regarding dates, locations, or progressive numbering for his works and rarely gave titles. Raeben's artistic choices on this subject also had to be taken into consideration: in the mid-thirties, in fact, he intentionally stopped giving titles to his works and did not keep note of the titles he had given, persuaded that, especially for his cityscapes and landscapes, their presence would reduce the degree of the spectator's freedom to perceive his art. Moreover, due to the lack of images of the paintings exhibited by Raeben in the 1920s and 1930s, only a few of the available titles could be matched with the works retraced. Based on this information, the available dates and titles have been listed as they originally appeared in existing records and publications and a rudimentary draft catalog commissioned by the artist's son, Jay Raeben, in the early 1980s. The rest of the dates are based on interviews with collection owners and students and research conducted at various archives. For practical issues, the progressive numbering and organization created by the artist's son in the 1980s have been adopted to list pastels and drawings belonging to Raeben's collection, now part of Josh Raeben's collection. The rest of the works have been documented as untitled, offering details in square brackets to make them distinguishable and identifiable in future studies.
The works are divided by technique and subject to show the evolution of Norman's style. However, the last section, Studio Works*, gathers his late works painted in his atelier, which are studies or demonstrations often made for teaching purposes. For this reason, the section gathers works on various media and mixed techniques.*

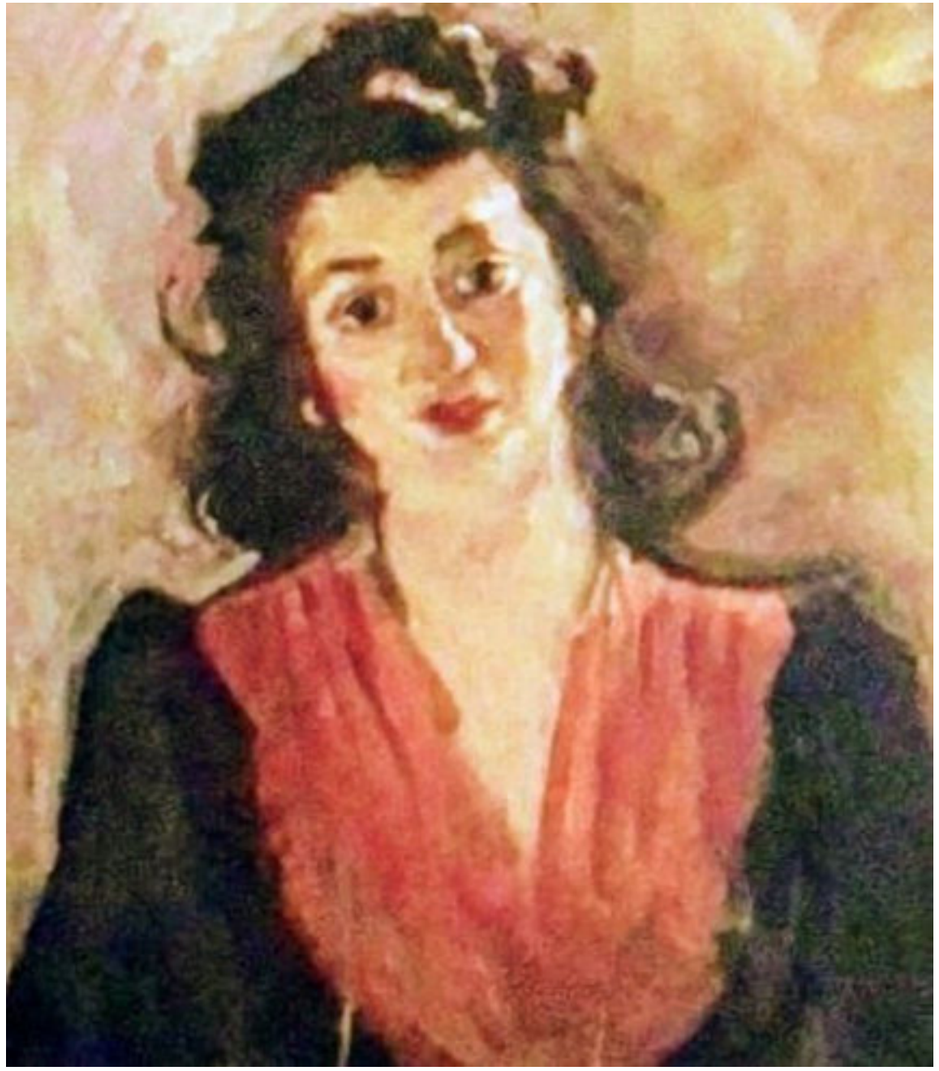
Paintings

Portraits

Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Sherwin Kaufman*, 1925, oil on canvas, h. 66 cm, w. 48.5 cm, Collection of Kenneth Kaufman.

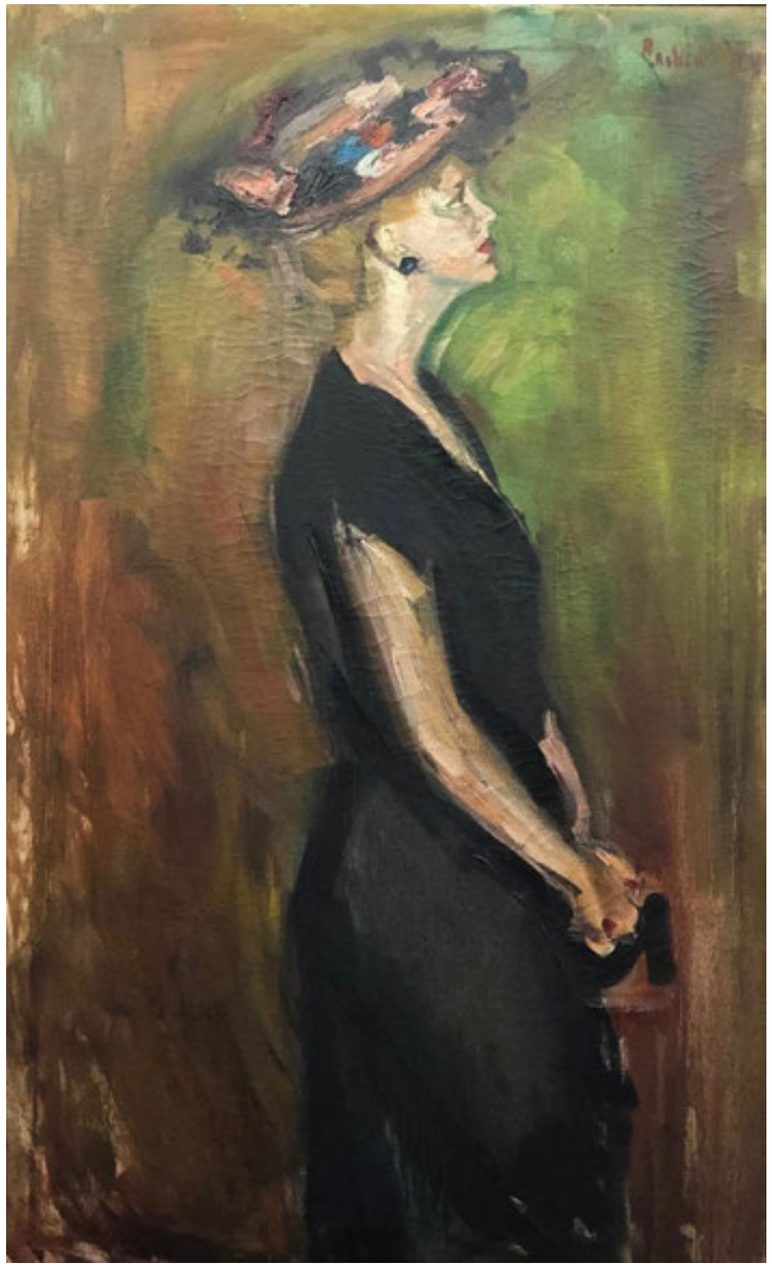
Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Sholem Aleichem*, 1926, oil on canvas, Tel Aviv, Beth Sholom Aleichem.

Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Olga Rabinowitz*, late 1920s, oil on canvas, Tel Aviv, Beth Sholom Aleichem.

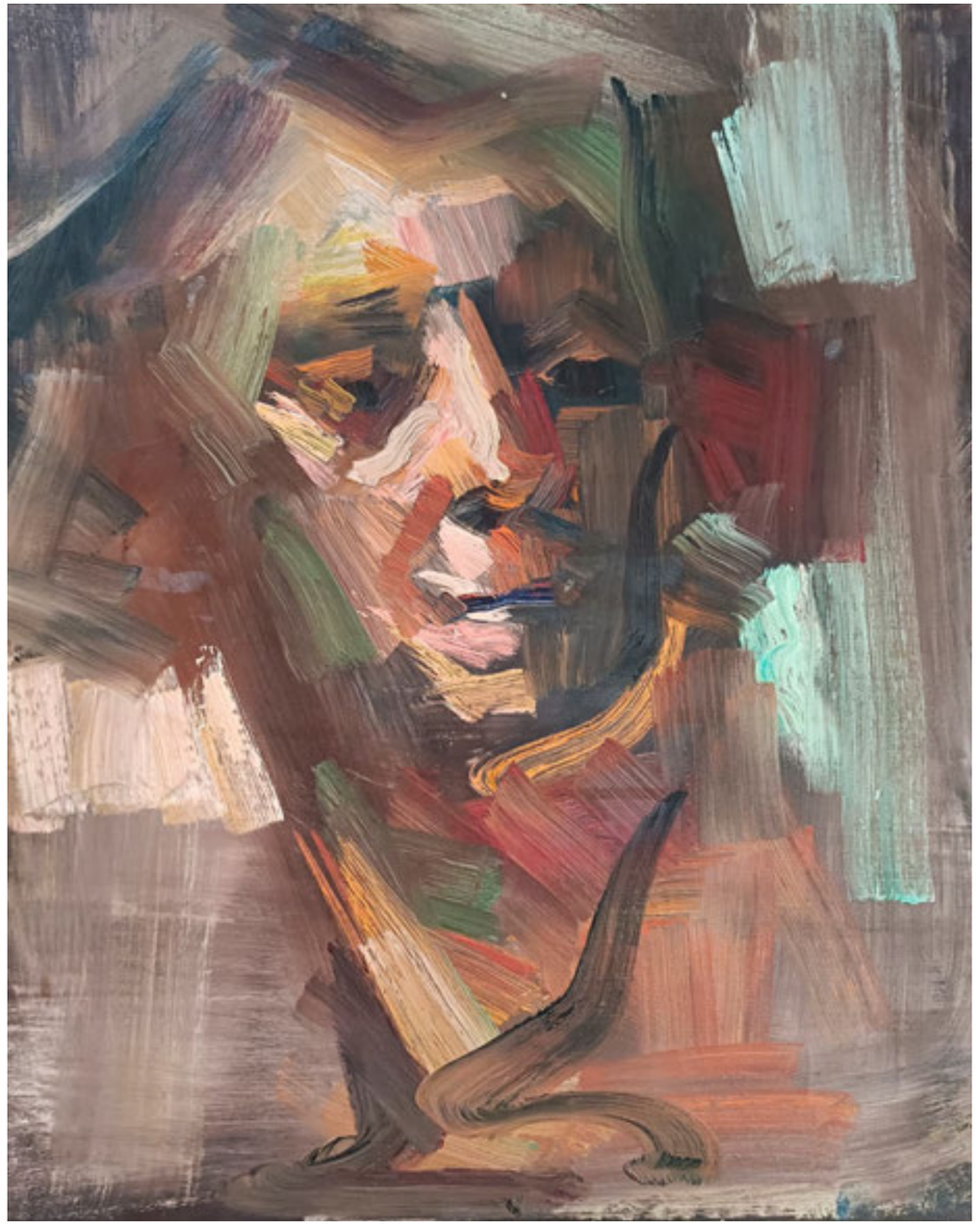


Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Polly Steinberg*, 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 51 cm, w. 41 cm, Collection of Chloe Steinberg.

Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Michael Steinberg*, 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 41 cm, w. 51 cm, Collection of Chloe Steinberg.



Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Stella Adler*, late 1930s-1940s, h. 117 cm, w. 71.5 cm, oil on canvas, New York, Stella Adler Studio of Acting.



Norman Raeben, *Self-portrait*, 1969, oil on canvas, h. 51 cm, w. 41 cm, Collection of Sylvia Karchmar.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait of a child], 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 61 cm, w. 46 cm, collection of Debora Moshief.

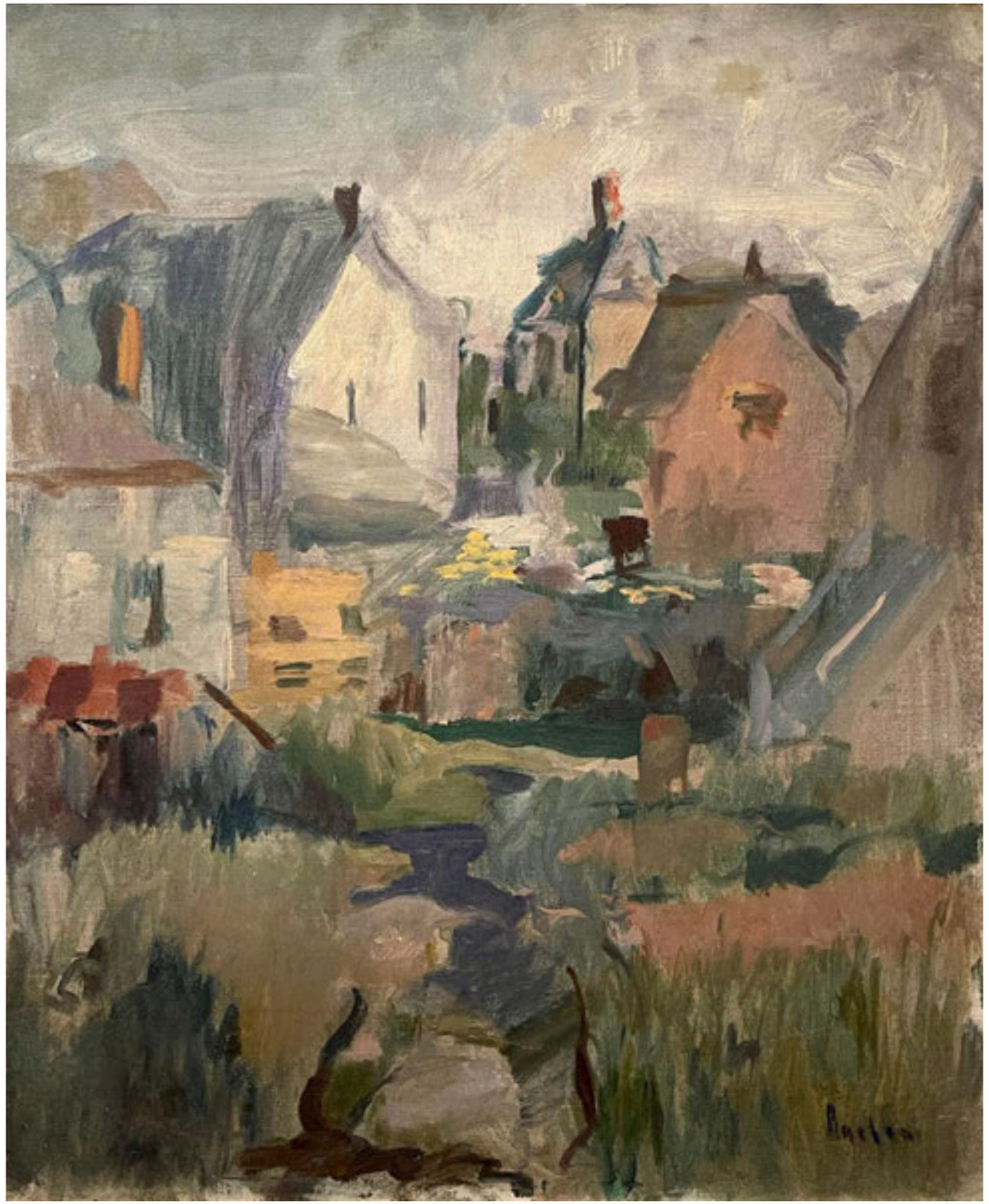
Norman Raeben, *The Poet with No Hands* [portrait of Bob Dylan], 1974, oil on canvas, h. 81.5 cm, w. 56.5 cm, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Bob Dylan Center, American Song Archives.

Cityscapes and Landscapes

Norman Raeben, *Venice*, 1920s, oil on canvas h. 68 cm, w. 72 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape near Provincetown], 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas h. 61 cm, w. 81 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [view of a harbor in Provincetown], 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 71 cm, w. 56 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [view with houses and trees], 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 71 cm, w. 61 cm, Collection of Ronald Waife.

Norman Raeben, untitled [view of an Asian city], 1945, oil on canvas, h. 62 cm, w. 133 cm, private collection.

Still Lifes

Norman Raeben, untitled [still life with table and fruit], 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 61.5 cm, w. 50.5 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [abstract still life with table], 1930s-1940s, oil on canvas, h. 61.5 cm, w. 50.5 cm, private collection.

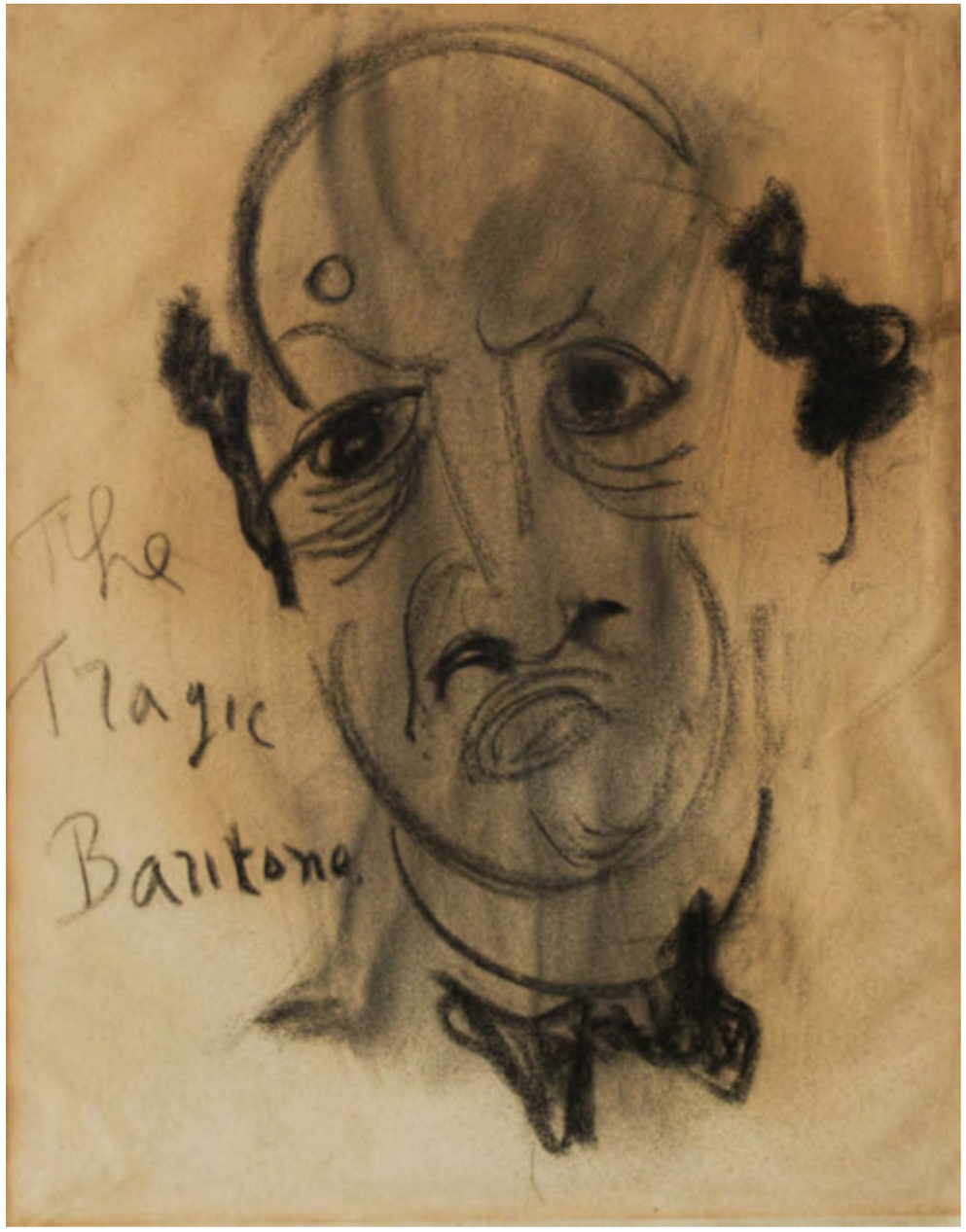
Norman Raeben, untitled [still life with table and flowers], 1941, oil on canvas, h. 61 cm, w. 81 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [still life with table and chalice], 1960s-1970s, oil on canvas, h. 61.5 cm, w. 51.5 cm, private collection.

Drawings

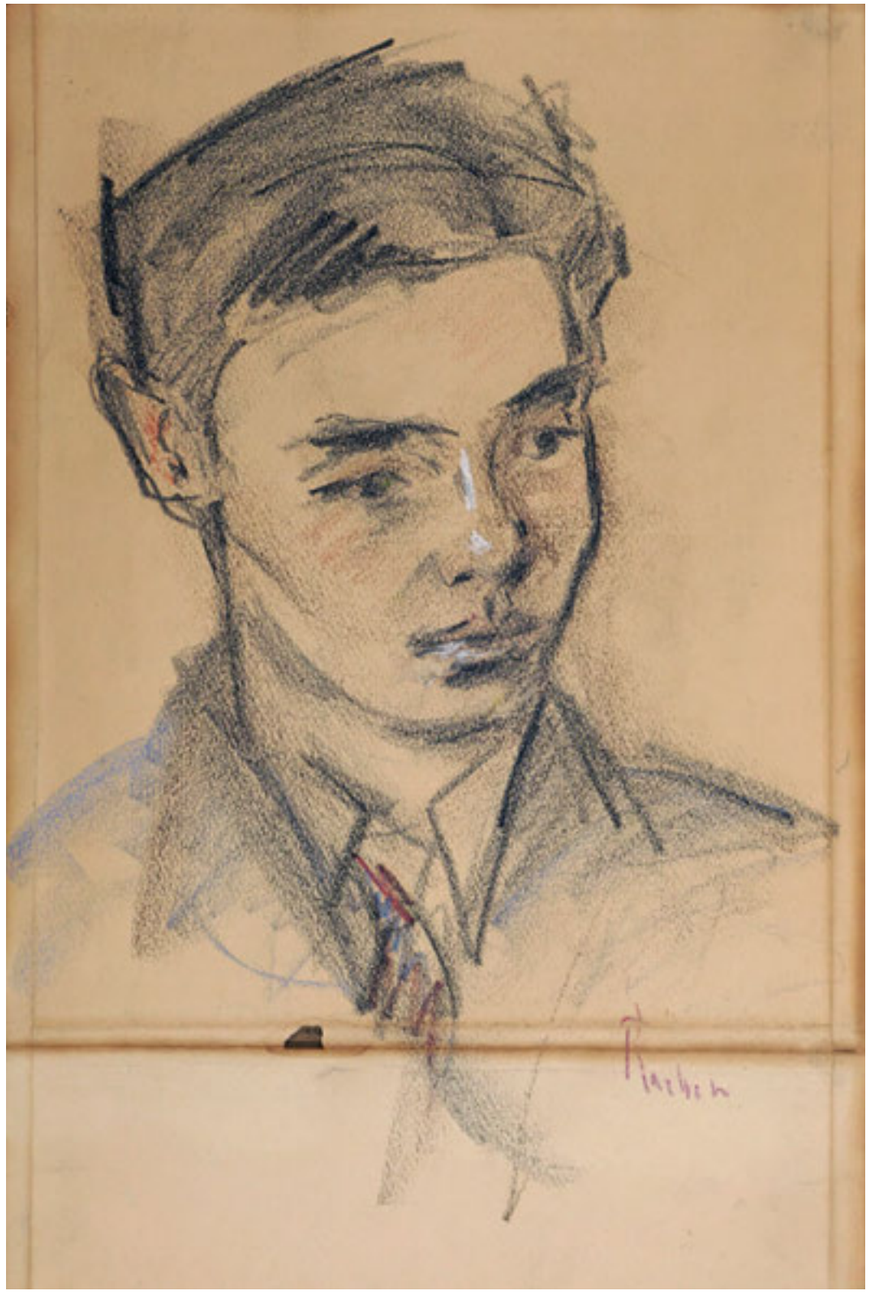
Portraits

Norman Raeben, F 3.4 [portrait of Miriam Newmauk], 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on paper, h. 56 cm, w. 45.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

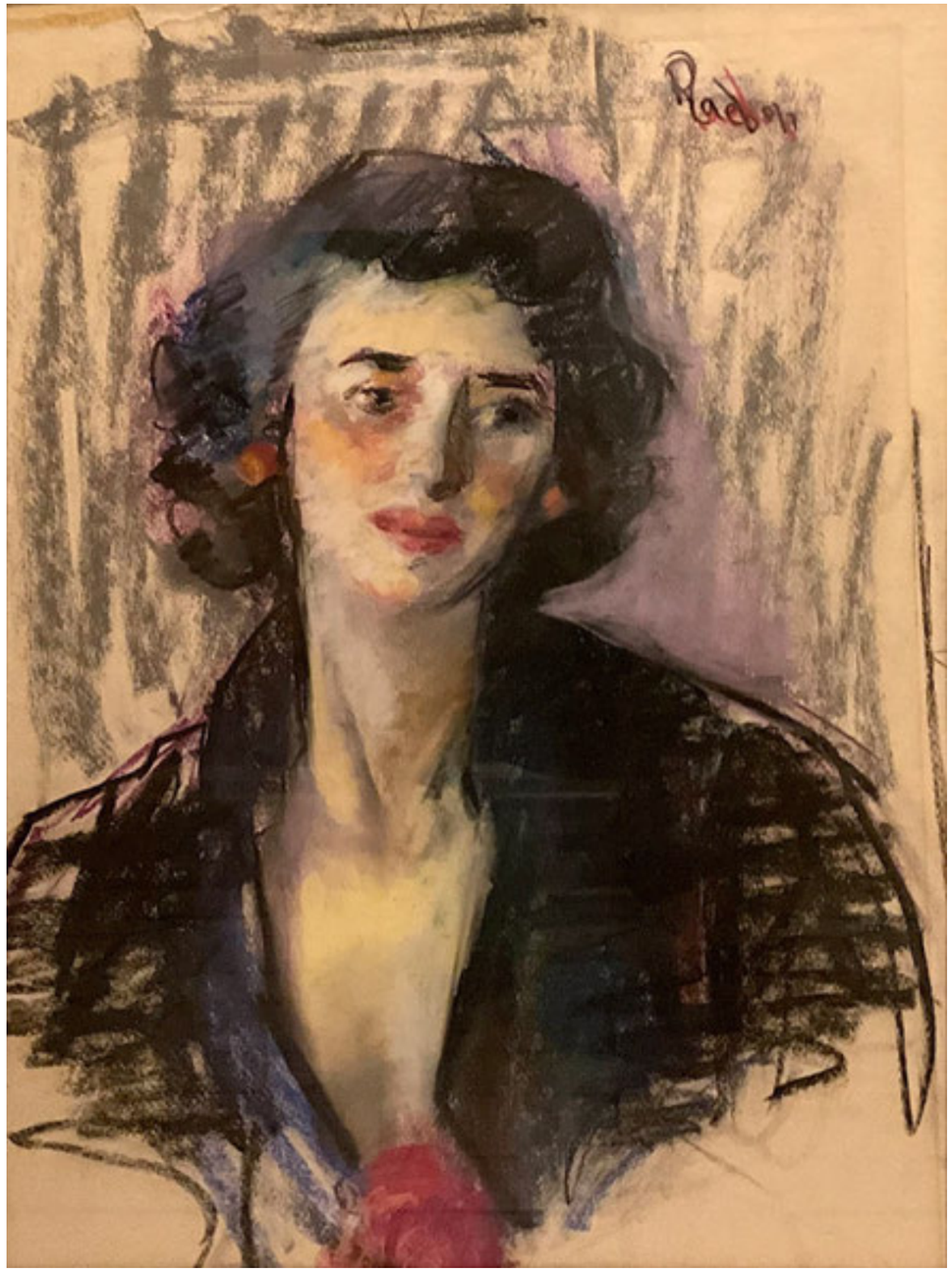


Norman Raeben, *The Tragic Baritone* [caricature of Seymour Osborne], 1939, charcoal on paper, h. 60 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, caricatures of Seymour and Anne Osborne, Norman Raeben, Paul Musikonsky and Michail Chekhov, 1940s, pen and pencil on paper, h. 31 cm, w. 22 cm, private collection.

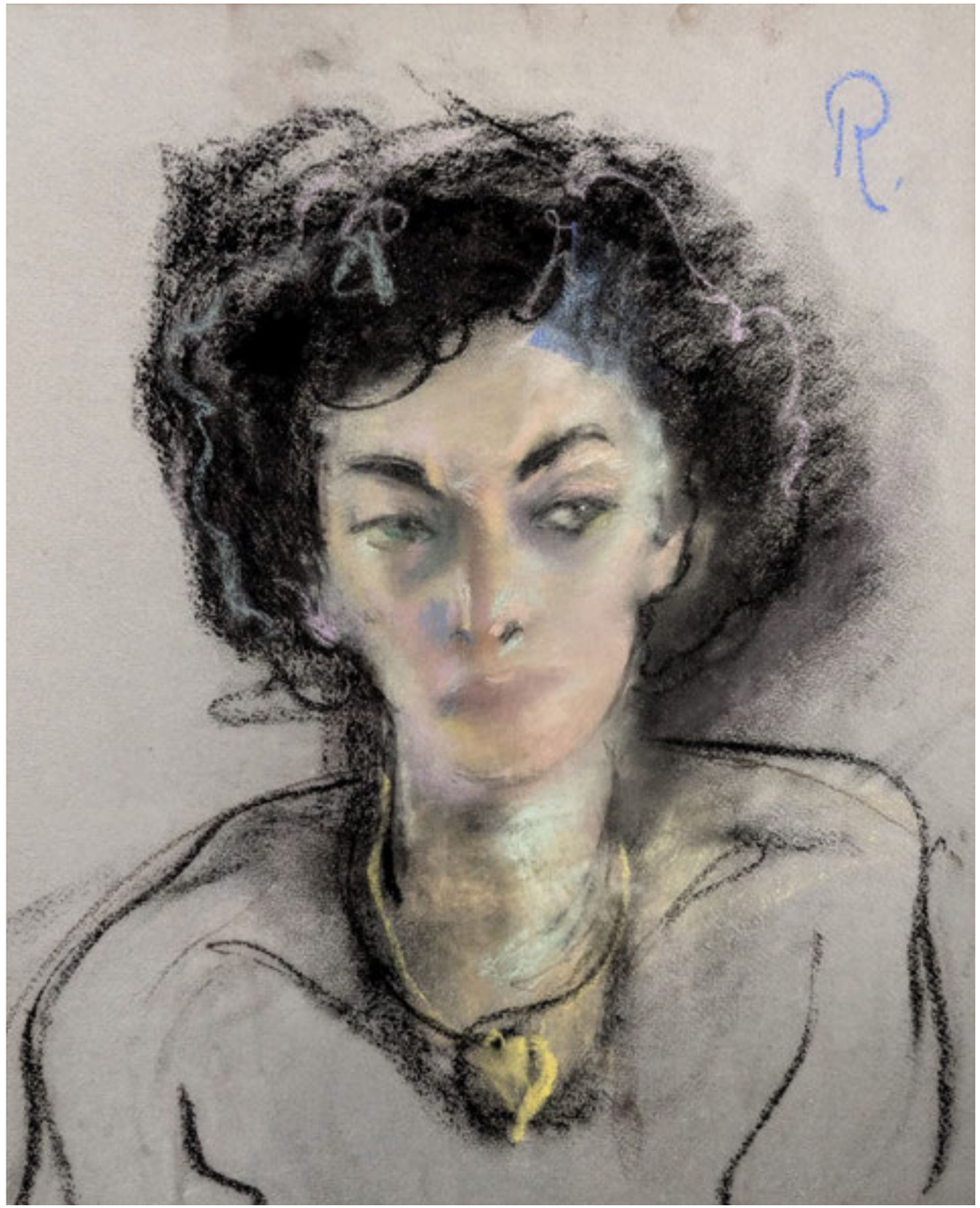


Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Jay Raeben*, 1940s, pastel on paper, h. 45,5 cm, w. 30.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



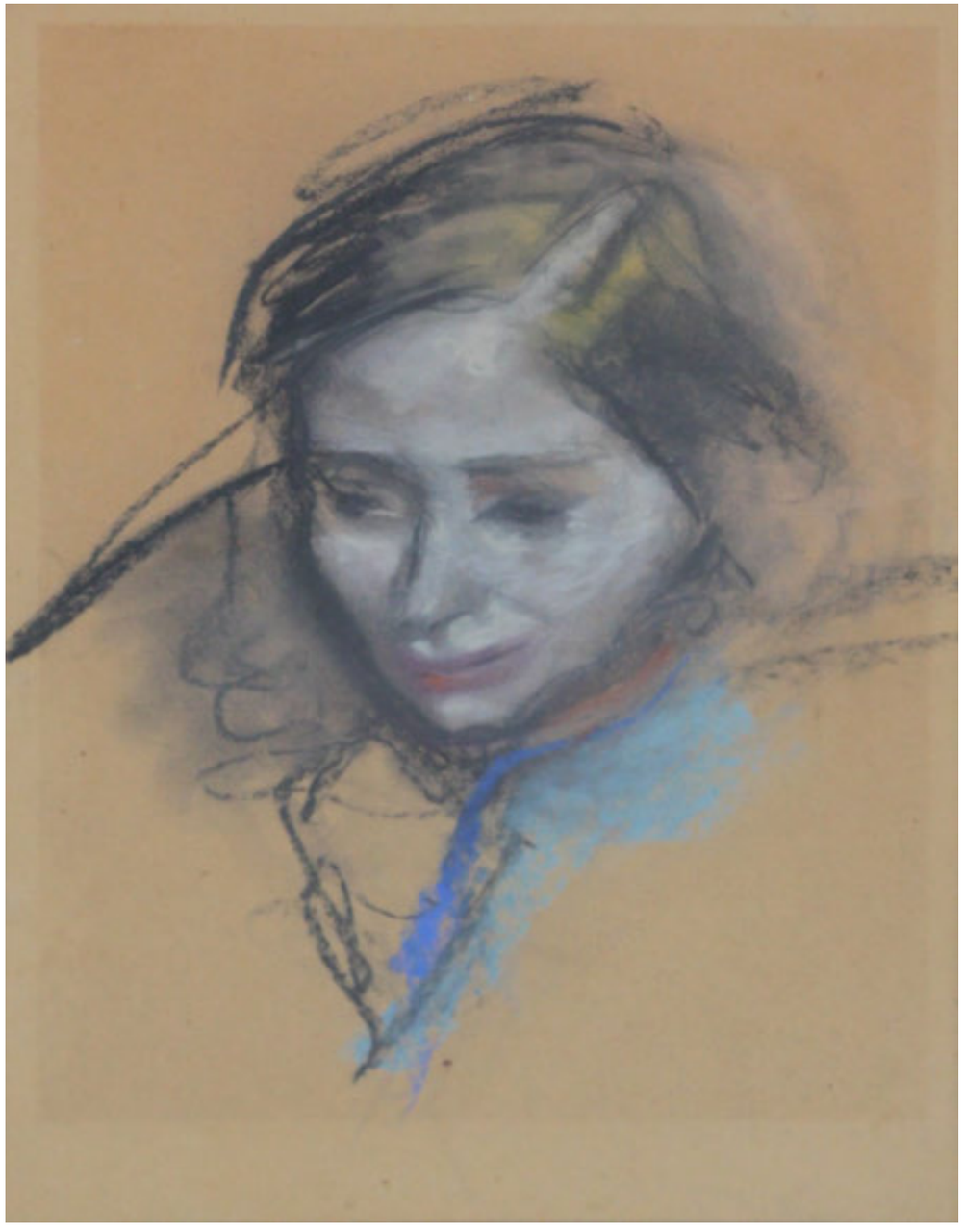
Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Miriam Daniels Kaufman*, 1940s, pastel on paper, h. 58.5 cm, w. 39.5 cm, Collection of Kenneth Kaufman.

Norman Raeben, F1.6 [portrait of a lady with a hat], 1940s, pastel on paper, h. 61 cm, w. 46 cm, Collection of Josh Raeben.



Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Diana Adler*, 1942, pastel on paper, h. 42 cm, w. 34.5 cm, Collection of Amanda Adler.

Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Amie Holley Bird*, 1949, pastel on paper, h. 51 cm, w. 38 cm, Collection of Casey Villard.



Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Dorothy Bird*, 1950-1951, pastel on paper, h. 48,5 cm, w. 33 cm, Collection of Casey Villard.

Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Anne Osborne*, 1955, pastel on paper, h. 40 cm, w. 44 cm, private collection.

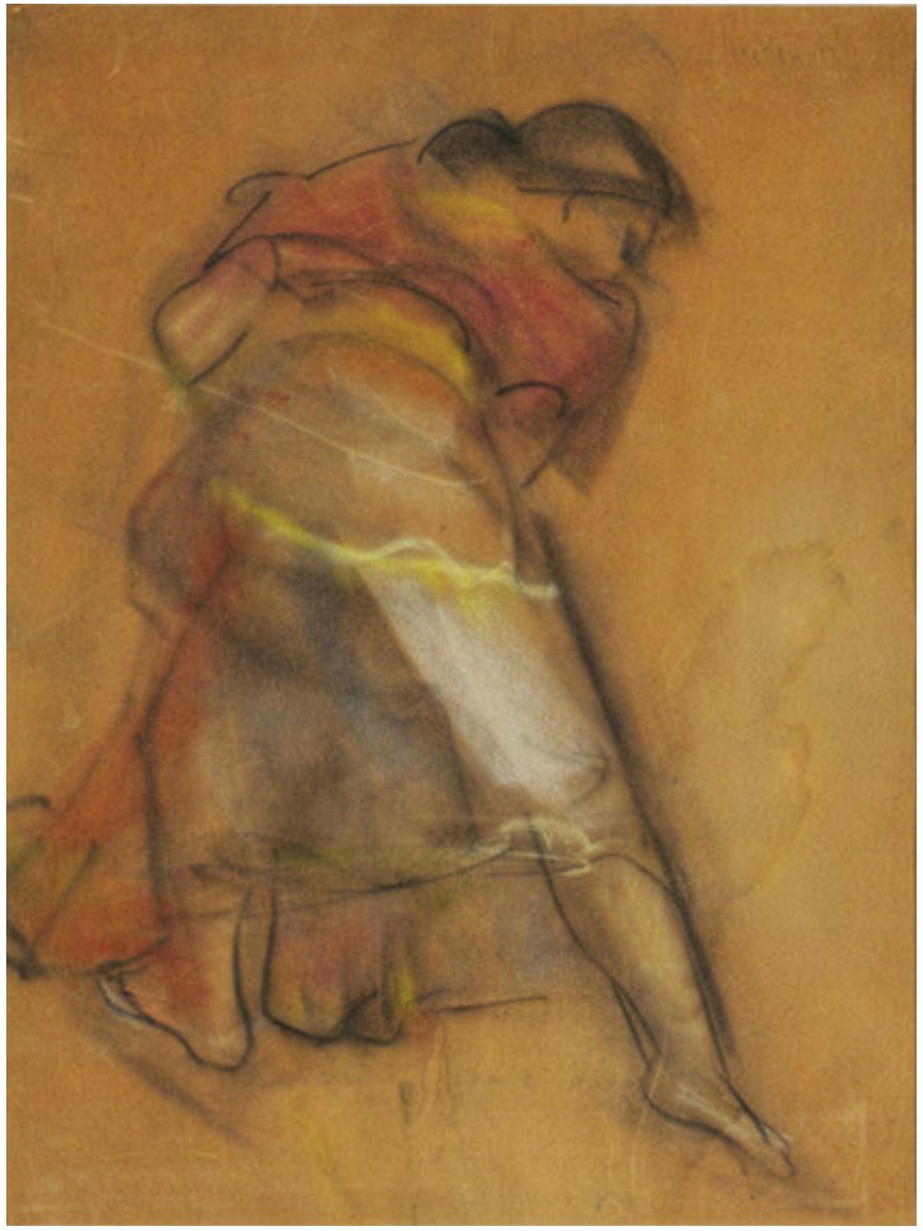
Norman Raeben, *Portrait of Steven Osborne*, 1950s, pastel on paper, h. 48 cm, w. 38 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait of a woman on commission], 1950s, pastel on paper, h. 59 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection. , 1950s, pastel on paper, h. 48 cm, w. 38 cm, private collection.

Nudes and Dancers

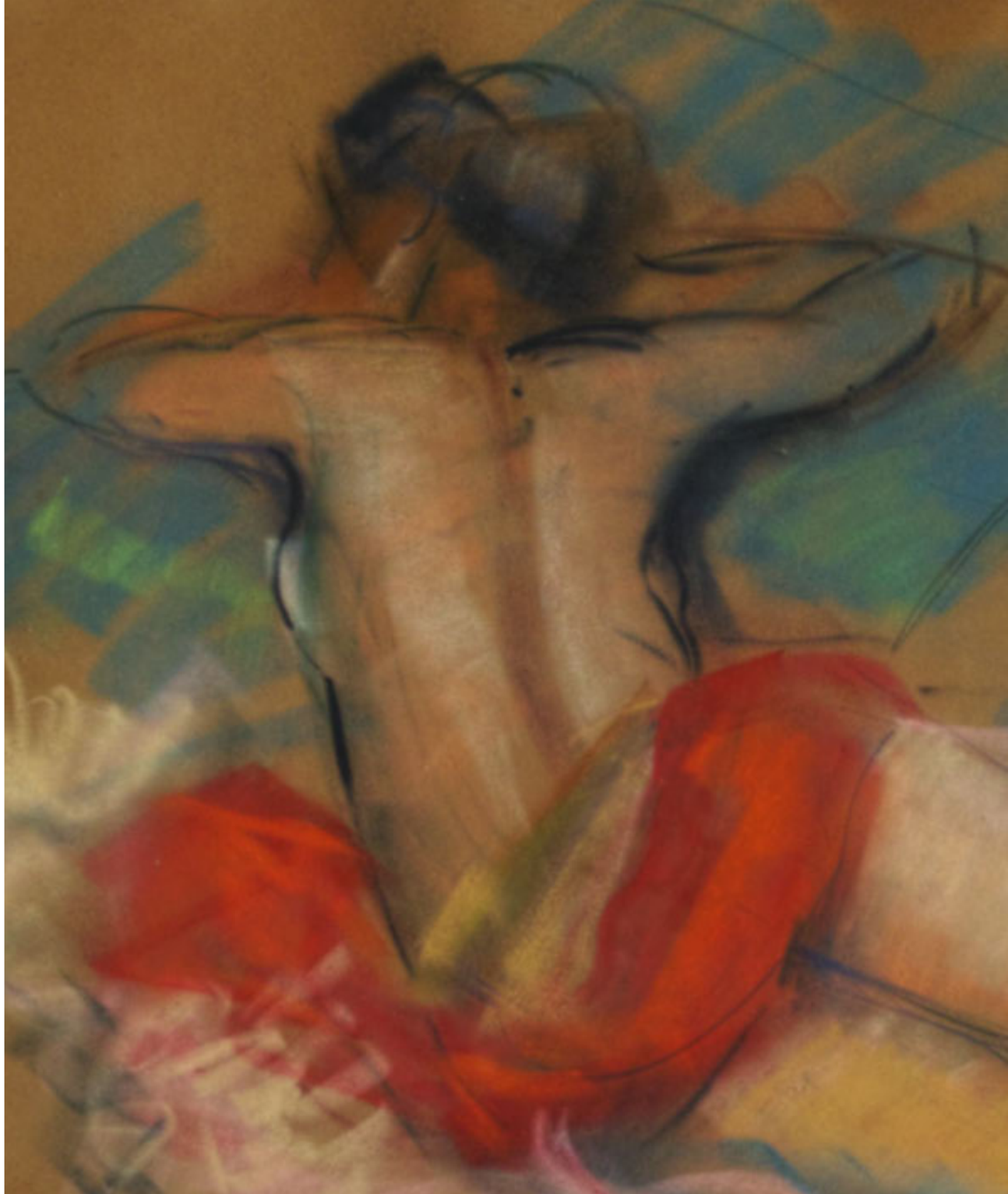
Norman Raeben, untitled [pastel with two dancers], 1940, pastel on paper, h. 60 cm, w. 40 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [pastel with five dancers], 1940, pastel on paper, h. 60 cm, w. 40 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [dancer from behind], 1940, pastel on paper, h. 42 cm, w. 32 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [half-dressed woman from behind, signed with pseudonym Andrei], 1940, pastel on paper,
h. 50 cm, w. 45 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [crouched dancer, signed with pseudonym Andrei], 1940, pastel on paper, h. 50 cm, w. 45 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [laying nude], 1960s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41 cm, w. 64 cm, private collection.

Figure Studies

Norman Raeben, F.1.2, 1930s-1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F.1.3, 1930s-1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F.1.5, 1930s-1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

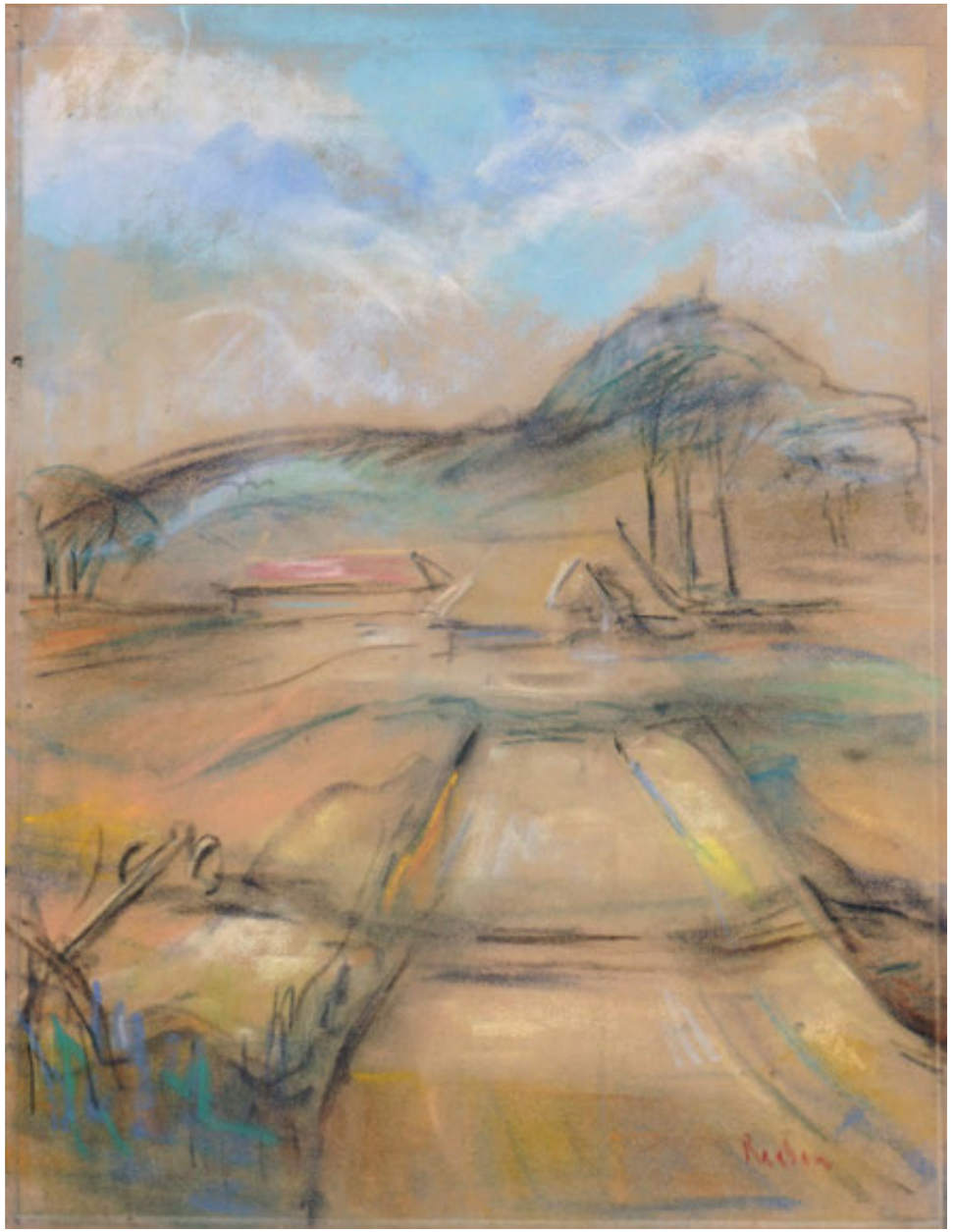
Norman Raeben, F.2.9, 1930s-1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F2.10, 1930s-1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [old man with hat], 1950s-1960s, pen on paper, h. 38 cm, w. 30.5 cm, Jed Buchwald collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [seven figures], 1950s-1960s, pen on paper, h. 28 cm, w. 20.5 cm, Jed Buchwald collection.

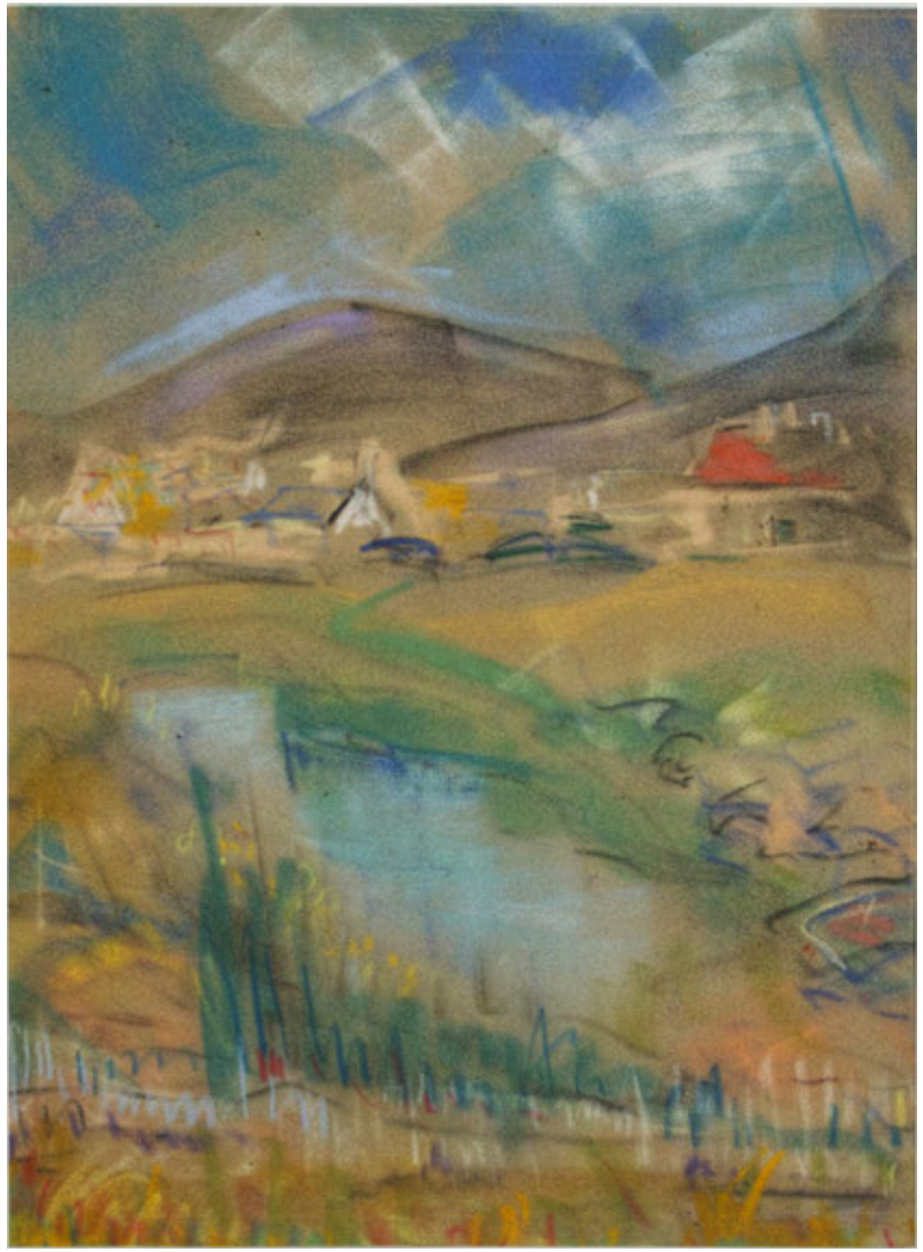
Cityscapes and Landscapes



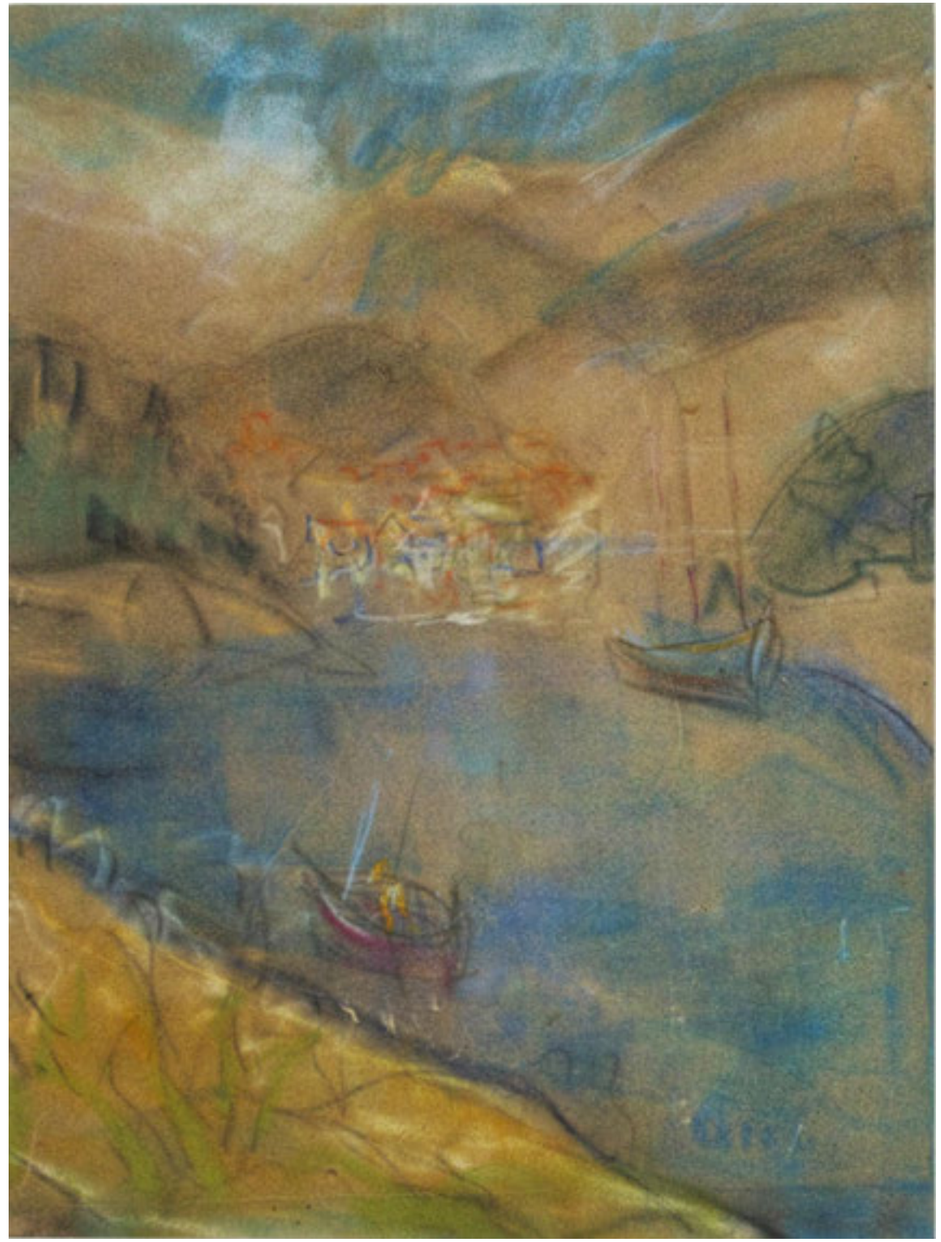
1.Norman Raeben, F3.P5, late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 34 cm, w. 26 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F3.P6, late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 34 cm, w. 26 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with two houses, trees e figures], late 1920s-early 1930s,
pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 25 cm, private collection.

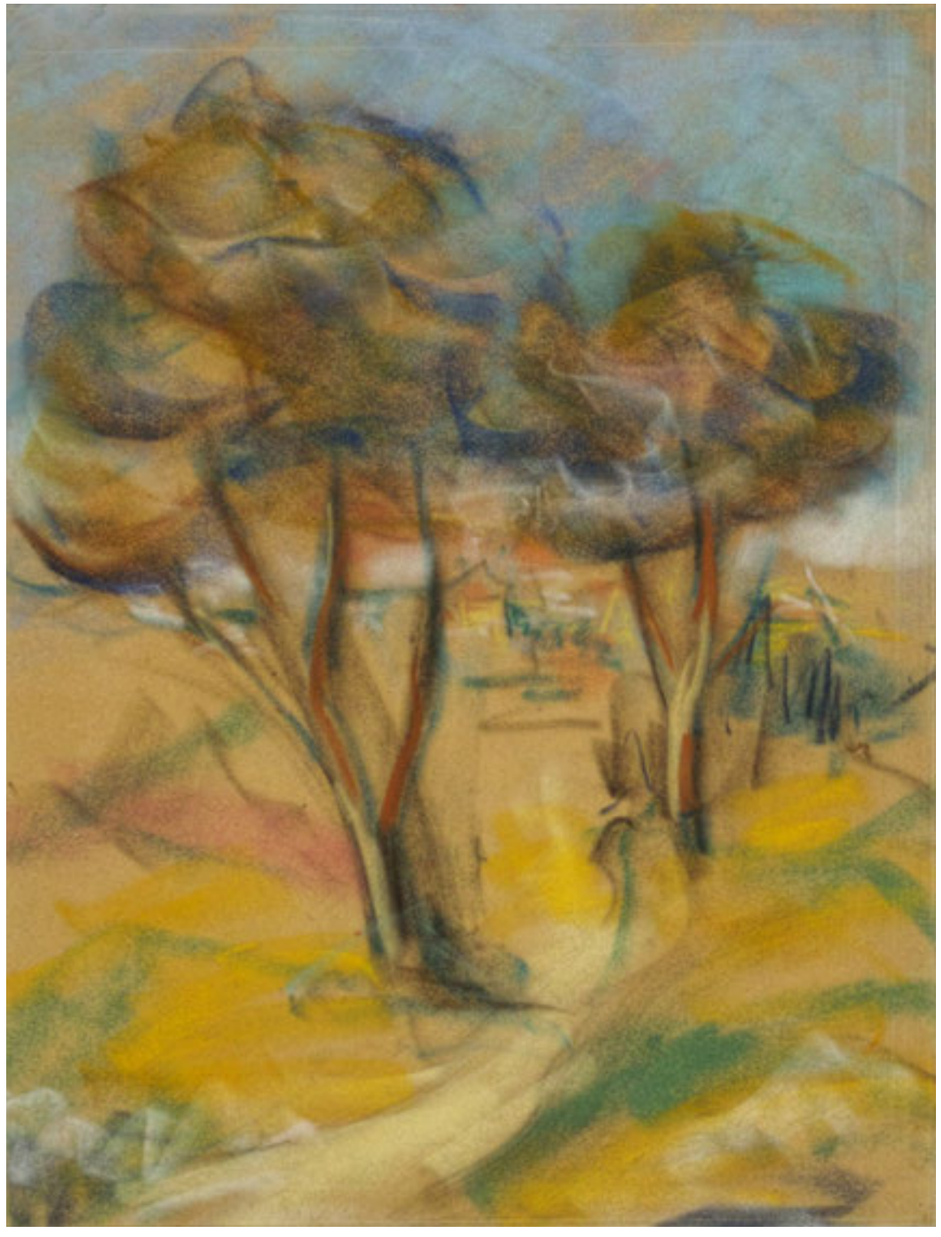


Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with mountains, houses and a pond], late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 25 cm, private collection.

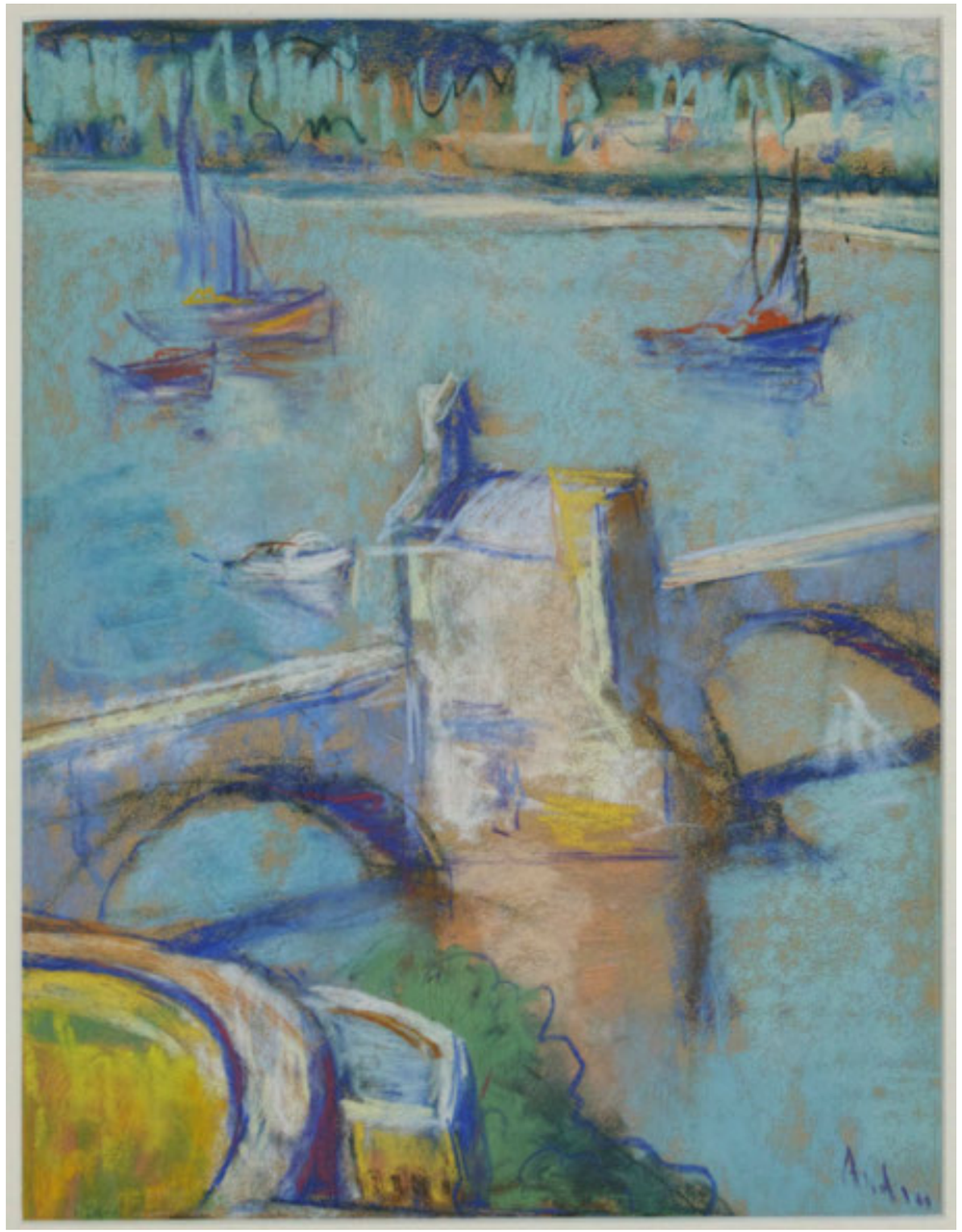


Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with a harbor, mountains, and boats], late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 25 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with two trees, houses, and a horse], late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33, w. 25 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with two trees], late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 25 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [landscape with river, bridge and boats, signed with pseudonym Andrei], late 1920s-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 25 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [impressionist landscape], late 1920s-1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 40 cm, w. 54 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P0, 1932-early 1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 28,5 cm, w. 35.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 31 cm, w. 48 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 50.5cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 45 cm, w. 59 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

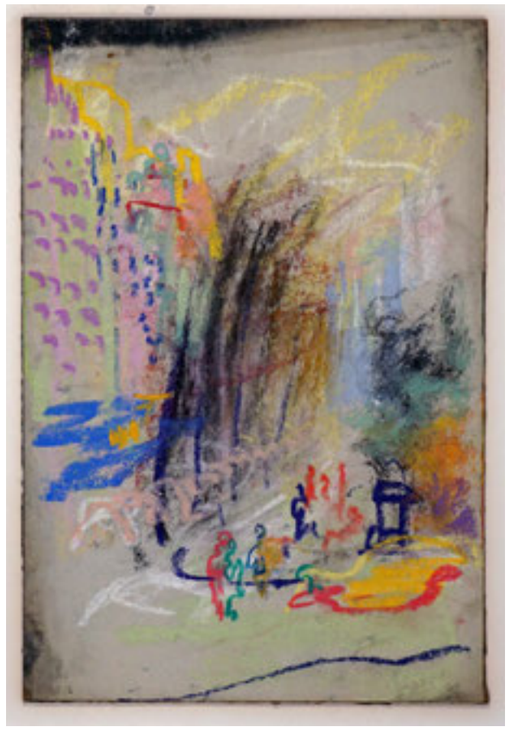
Norman Raeben, B2.P4, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 50.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B2.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper,
h. 34.5 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

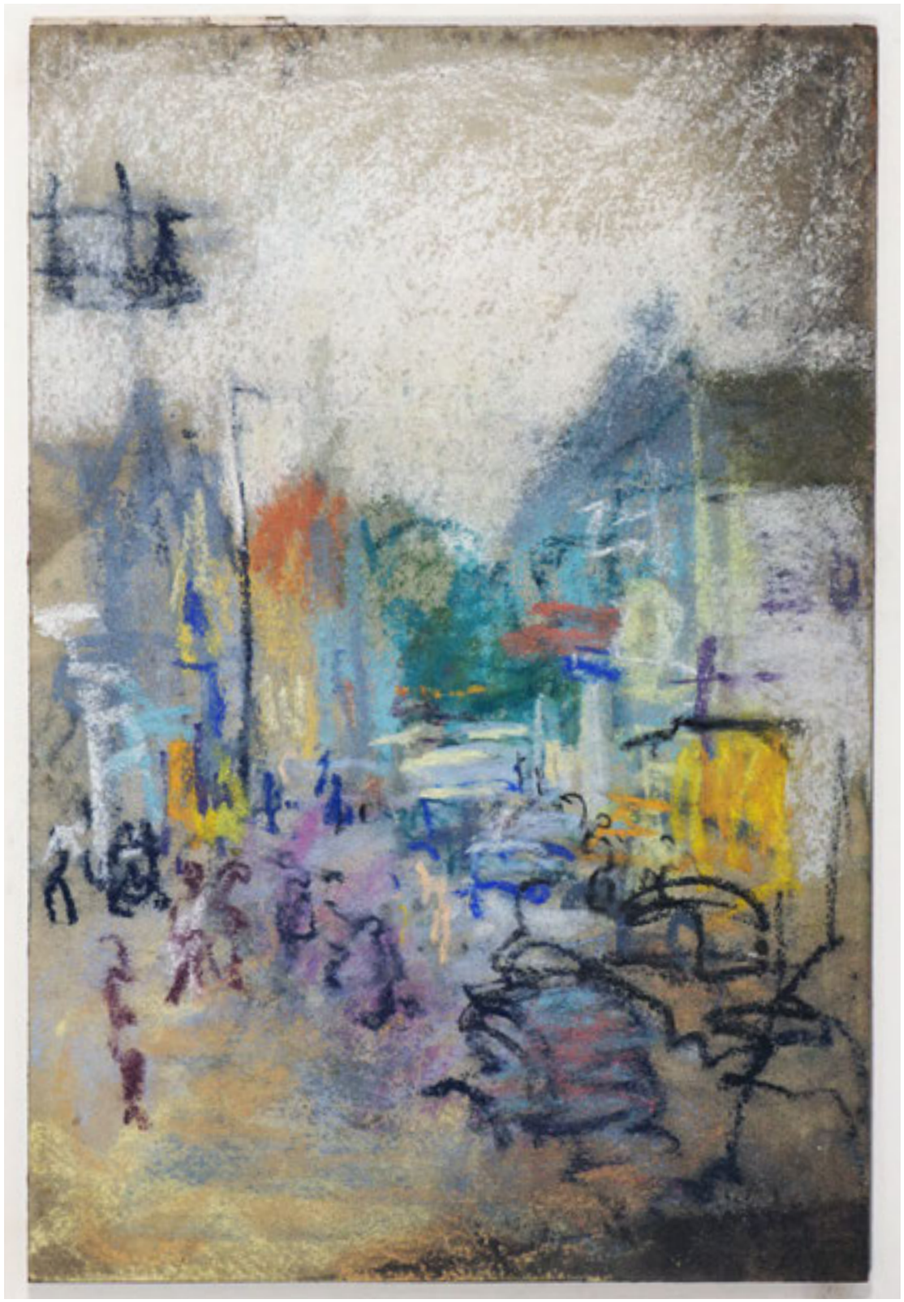


Norman Raeben, B3.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper,
h. 38.5 cm, w. 26 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper,
h. 38 cm, w. 25,5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P4, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper,
h. 38 cm, w. 26 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38.5 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



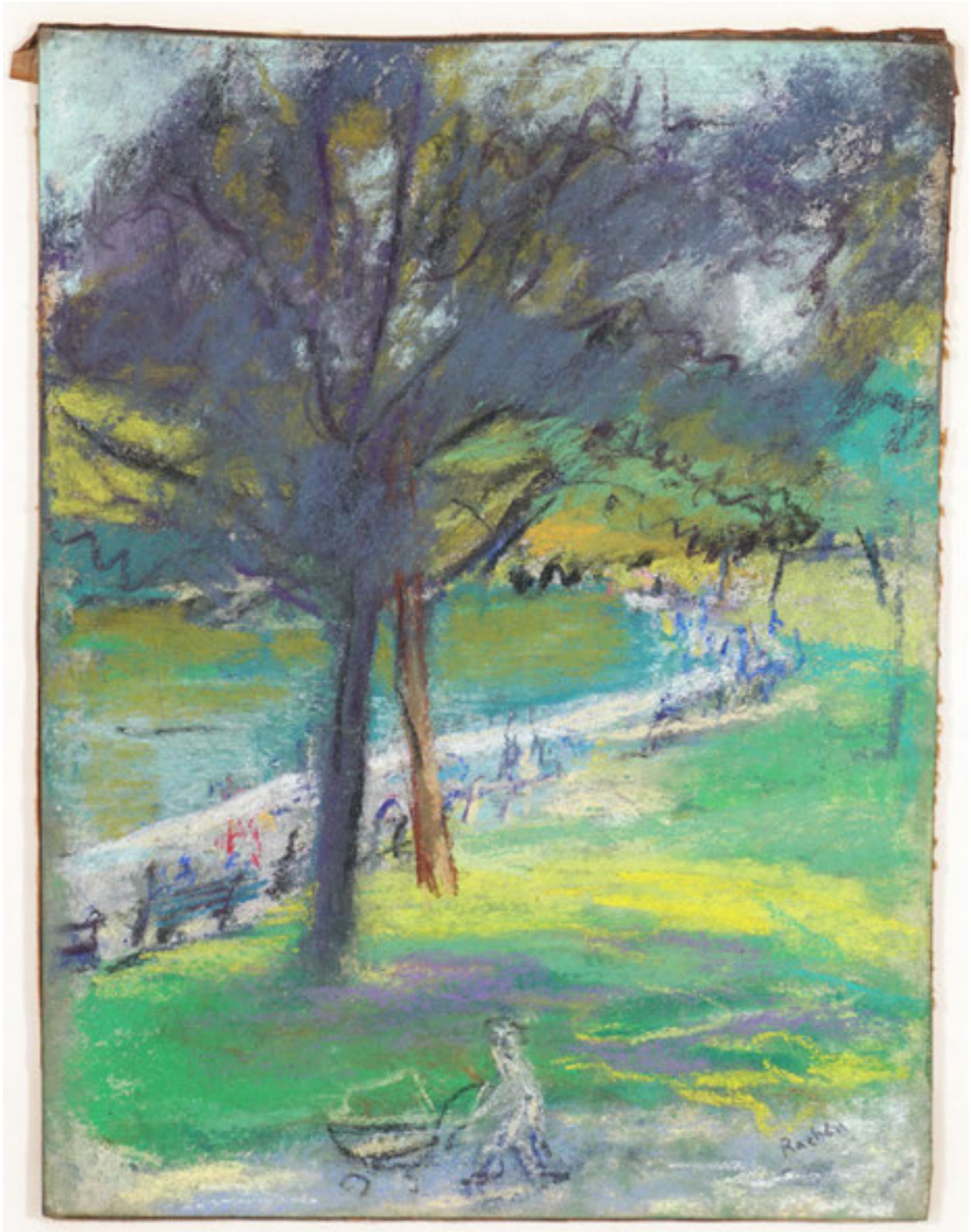
Norman Raeben, B3.P6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38.5 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38.5 cm, w. 24.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 37.5 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B3.P10, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 38 cm, w. 25.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B3.P11, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 34.5 cm, w. 26 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 45 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43.5 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 54 cm, w. 44 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P4, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

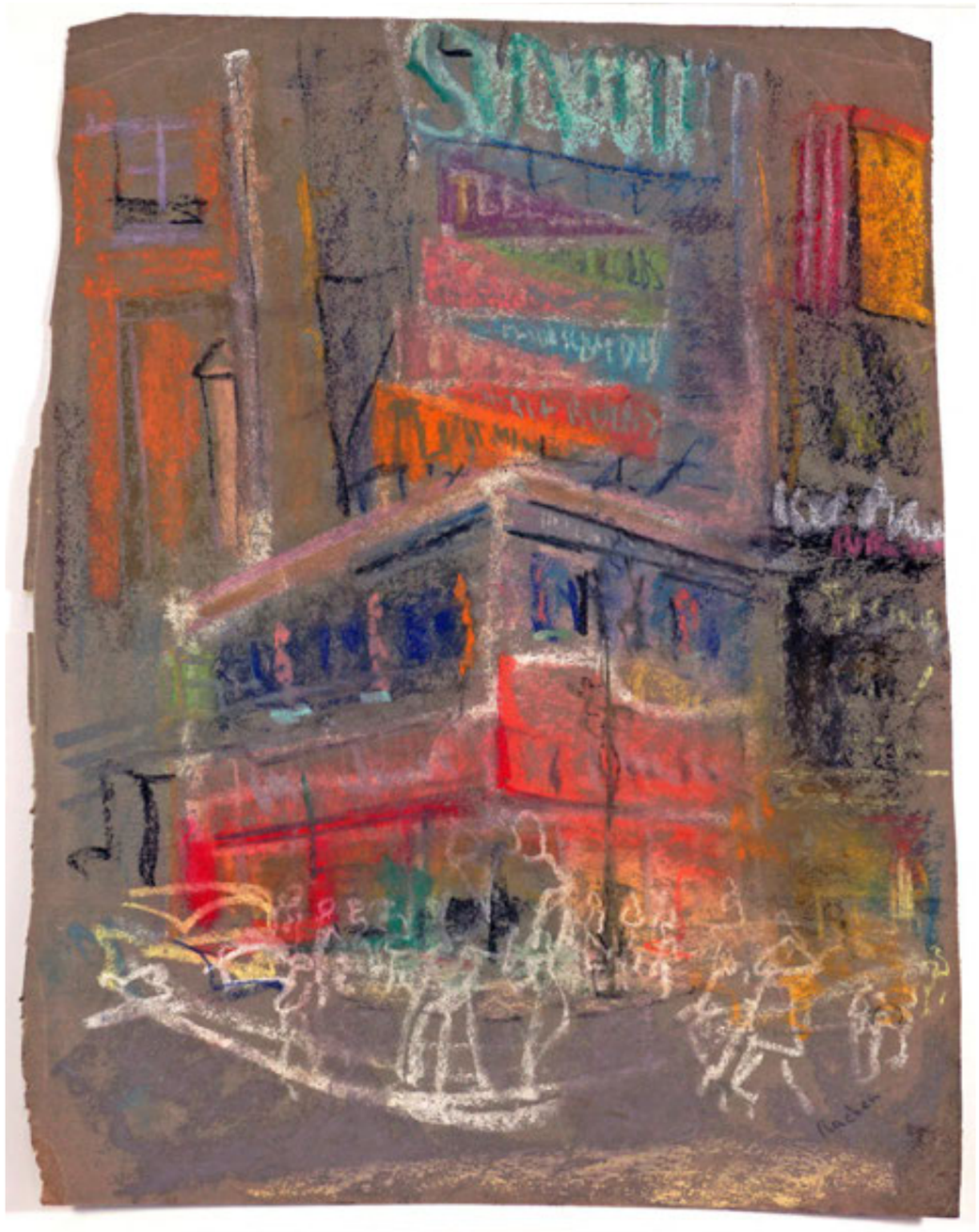
Norman Raeben, B4.P5, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P6, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

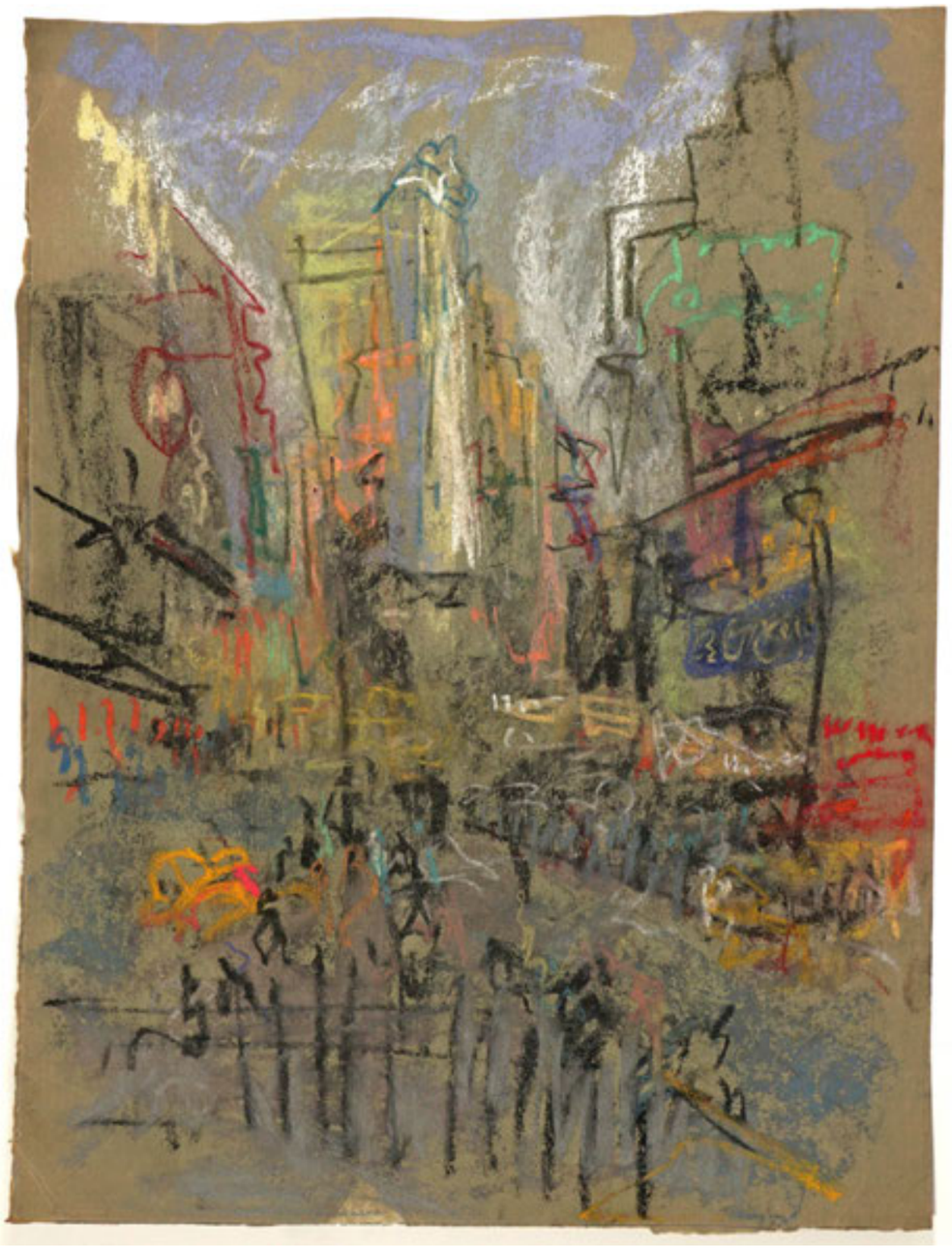
Norman Raeben, B4.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 53.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 52.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B4.P10, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 56 cm, w. 43 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

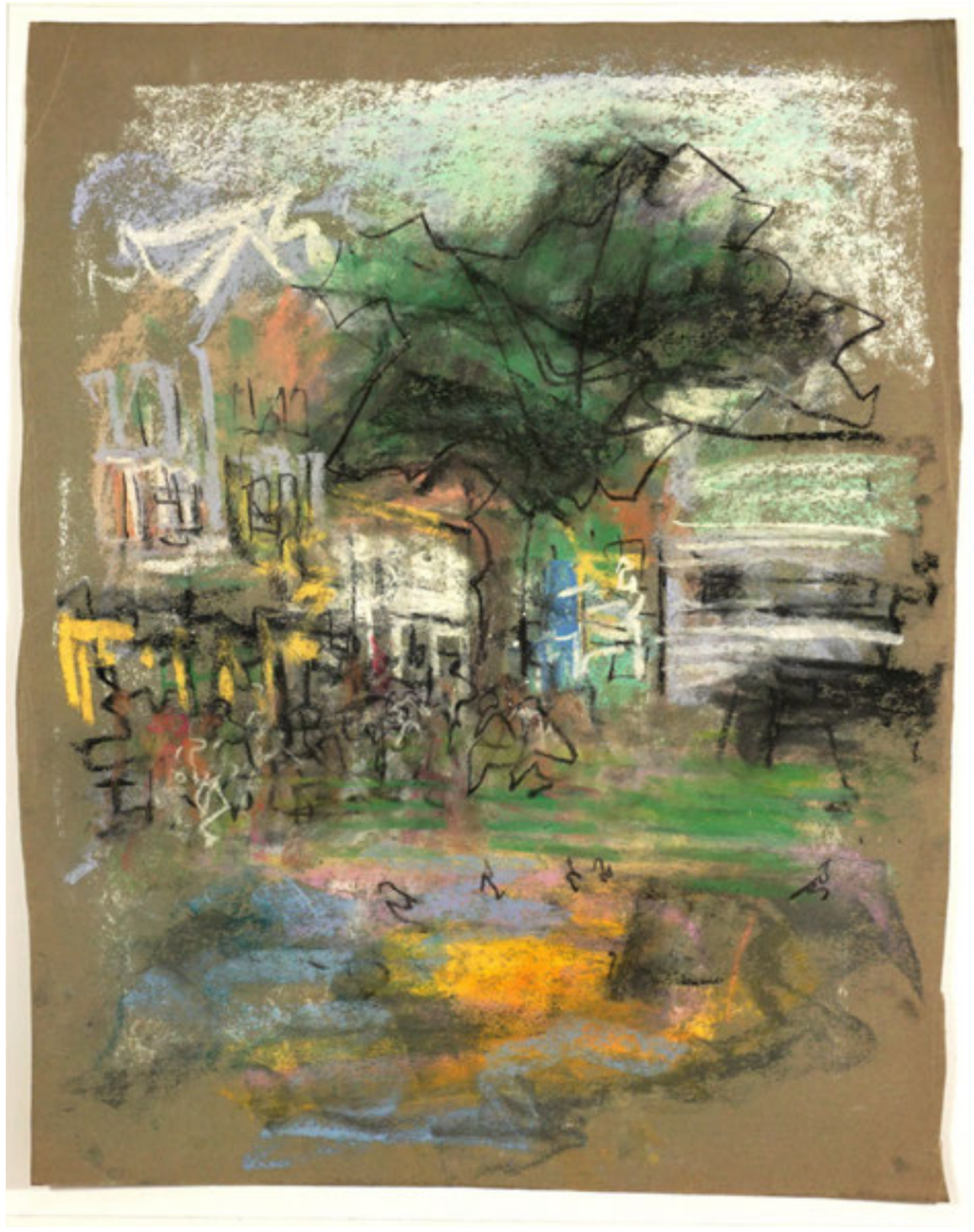


Norman Raeben, B4.P12, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 53.5 cm, w. 42 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P13, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44.5 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P14, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 46 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P15, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 45 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B4.P16, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 56 cm, w. 44.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P17, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43.5 cm, w. 55 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P18, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44,5 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P19, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44.5 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P20, 1932-early 1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 51 cm, w. 41.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B4.P21, 1932-early 1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 51 cm, w. 42 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42.5 cm, w. 52.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42.5 cm, w. 52.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

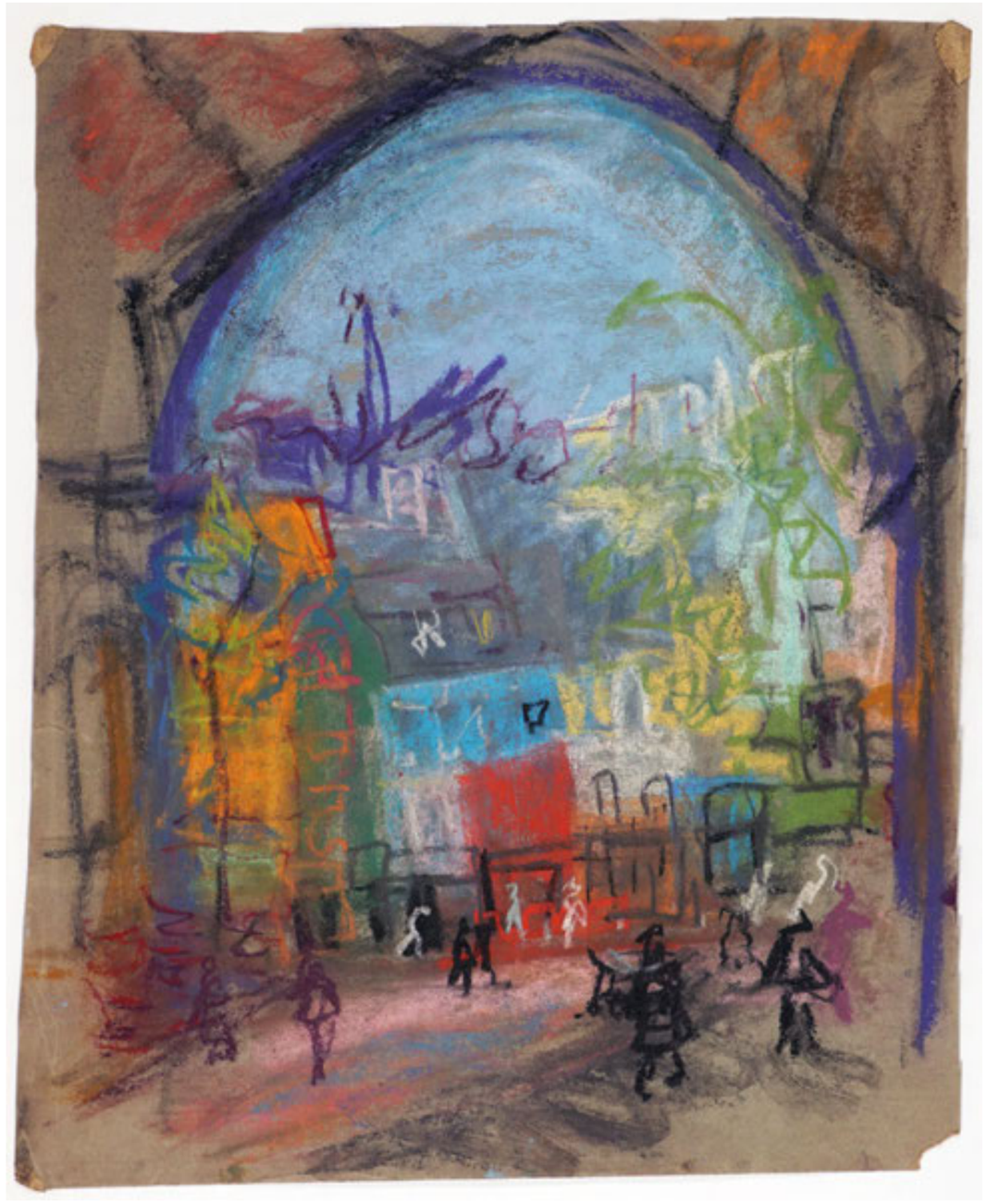
Norman Raeben, B5.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 52.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 52 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P6, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 52 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B5.P9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 52 cm, w. 42 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P10, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42,5 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

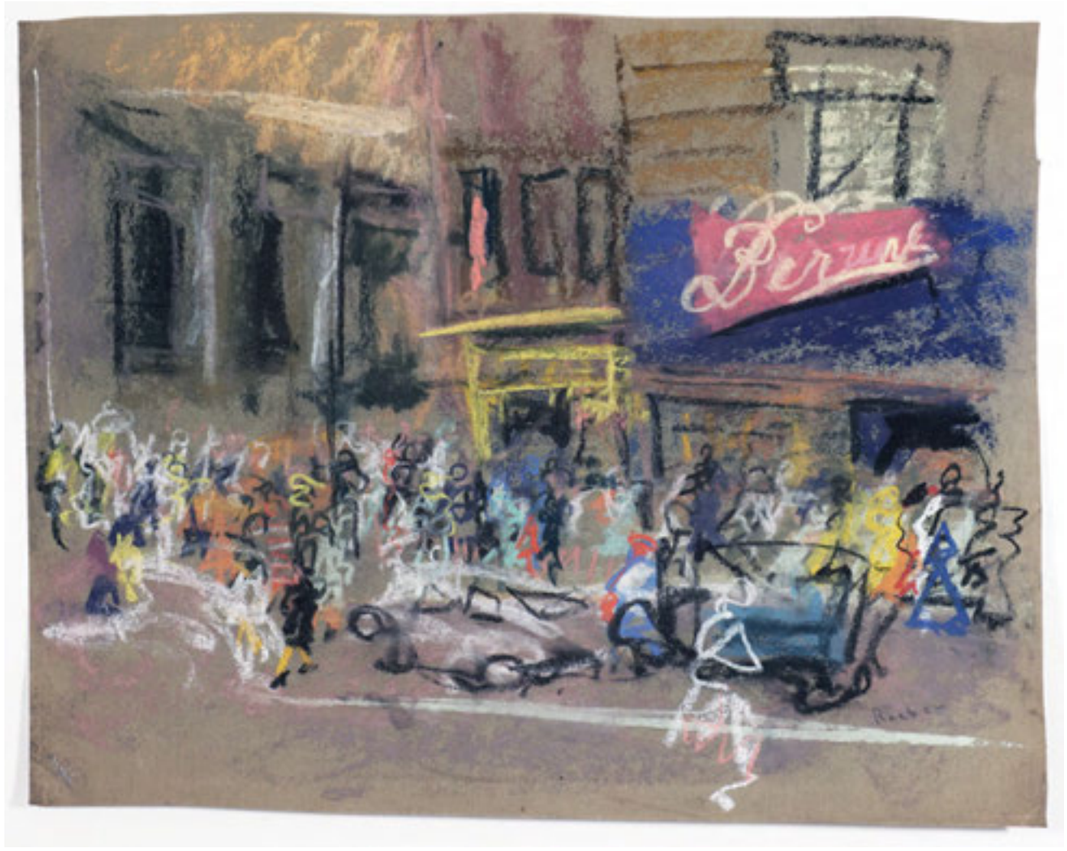
Norman Raeben, B5.P11, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P12, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P14, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 34 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B5.P13, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 45 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41,5 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B6.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42.5 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

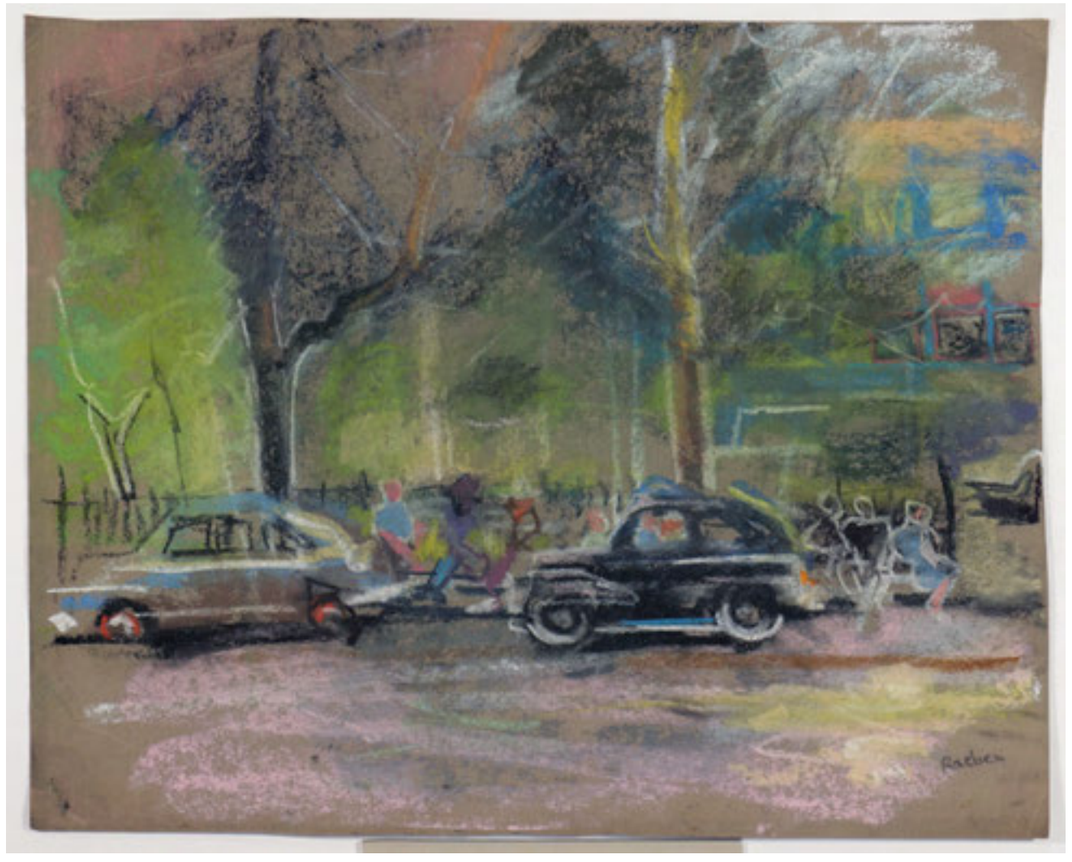
Norman Raeben, B6.P4, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43.5 cm, w. 55 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 53.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 55 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B6.P9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B6.P10, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 45 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41.5 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44 cm, w. 53.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P4, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 51,5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42,5 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P7, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P9, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 48 cm, w. 62 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

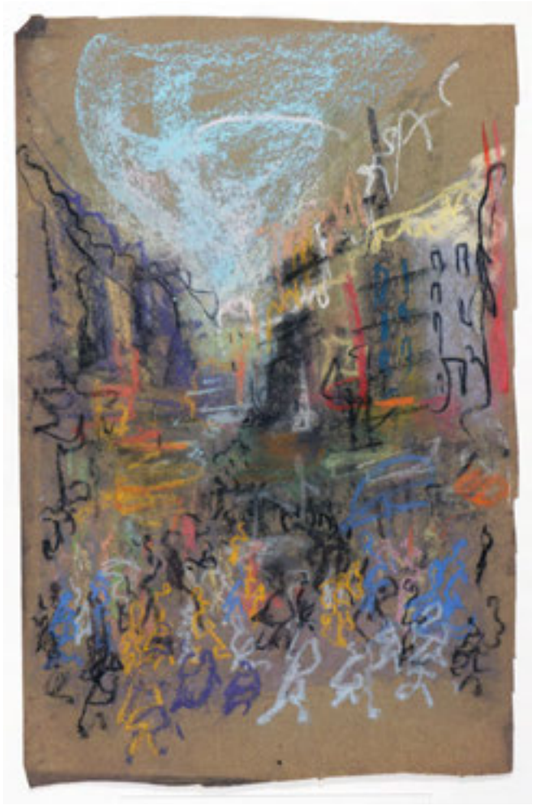
Norman Raeben, B7.P10, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P11, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41 cm, w. 52 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P12, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B7.P13, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P1, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33,5 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, B8.P2, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 50.5 cm, w. 33 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P3, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P4, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41.5 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P5, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41.5 cm, w. 50.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 53 cm, w. 43 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P7, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 56 cm, w. 47 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 52.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P10, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 56 cm, w. 46 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P11, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43.5 cm, w. 54.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P12, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P13, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 54 cm, w. 43 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P14, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P15, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43.5 cm, w. 53 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P16,
1932-early 1940s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 42.5 cm, w. 52 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P17,
1932-early1950s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 43 cm, w. 54.5 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B8.P18,
1932-early1950s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 42.5 cm, w. 54 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P1,
1932-early1950s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 42.5 cm, w. 53 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P2, 1932-early 1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 32.5 x cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P4, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33.5 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P5, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 32.5 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, B9.P8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 34 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.1, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44.5 cm, w. 56 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.4, unknown date, mixed technique on paper, h. 46 cm, w. 61 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 32 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

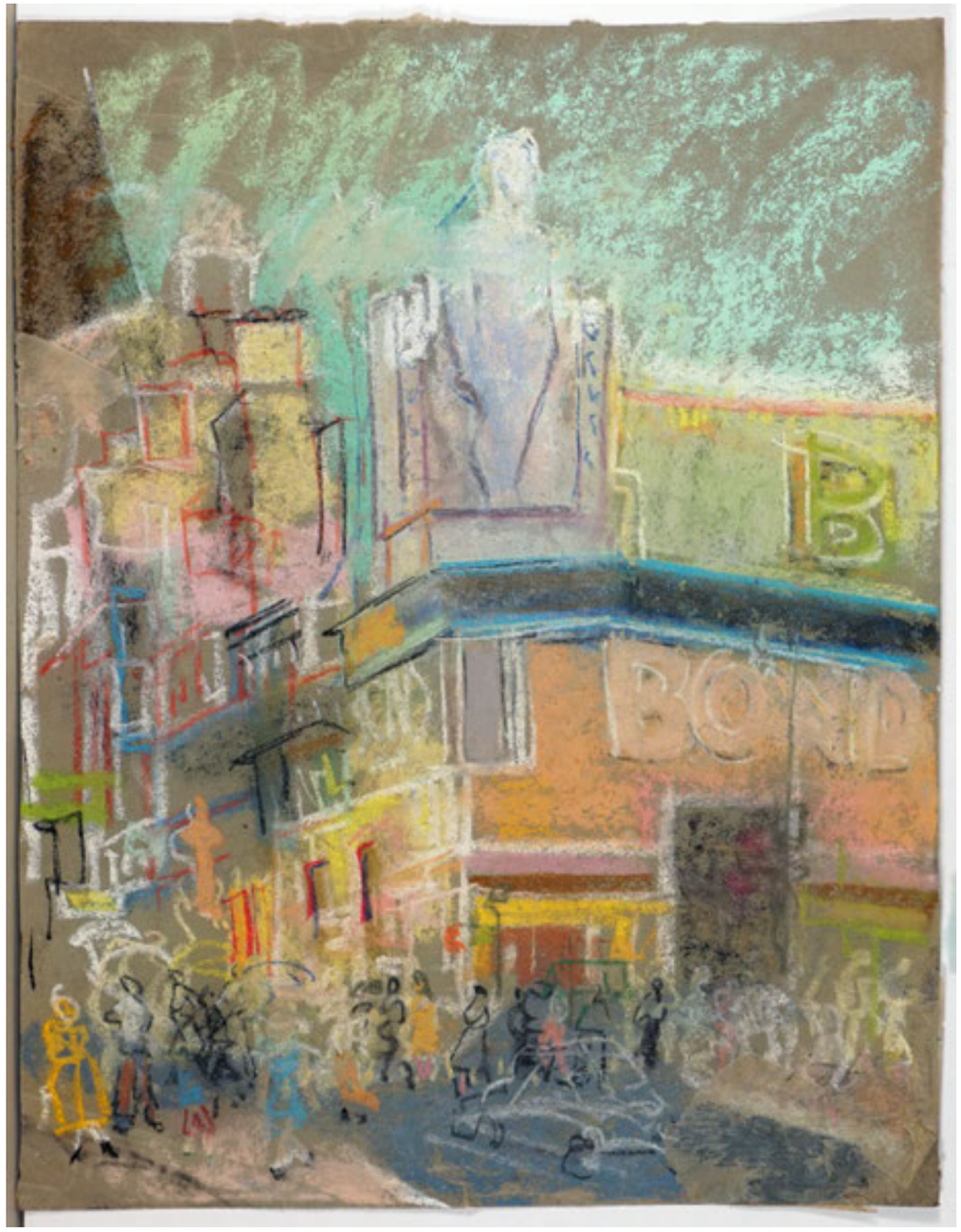
Norman Raeben, F1.8, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 42 cm, w. 52,5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.9, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43 cm, w. 54 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.10,
1932-early 1940s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 47 cm, w. 65 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.11,
1932-early 1940s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 46 cm, w. 56 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.12, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 43,5 cm, w. 44 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, F1.13, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 54 cm, w. 42,5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

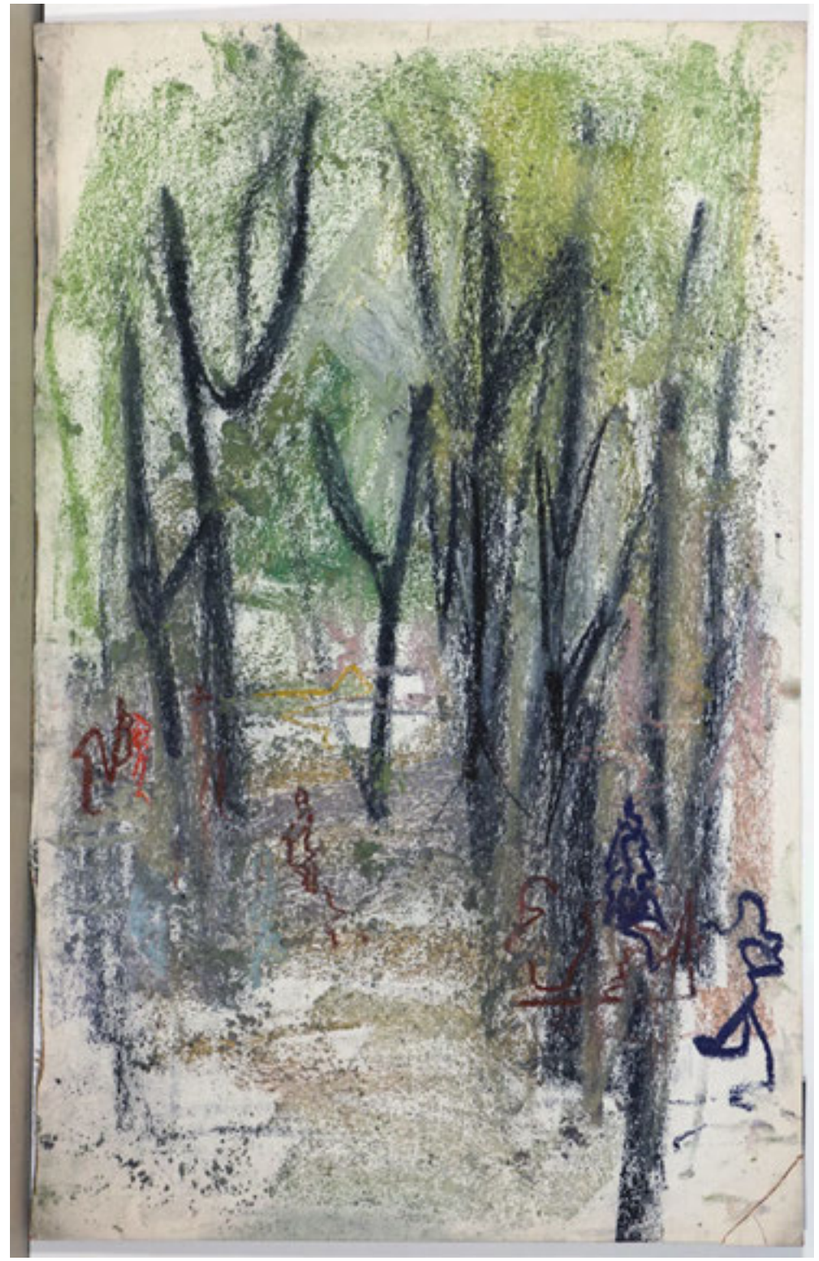
Norman Raeben, F1.14,
1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper,
h. 33 cm, w. 52 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.16,
1932-early1950s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 31 cm, w. 48 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.17,
1932-early1950s,
pastel on sandpaper,
h. 43 cm, w. 56 cm,
Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F1.18, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 50 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F2.1, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 52 cm, w. 36 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, F2.2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on paper, h. 50 cm, w. 32.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F2.3, 1932-early1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 49.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F2.4, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 33 cm, w. 52 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

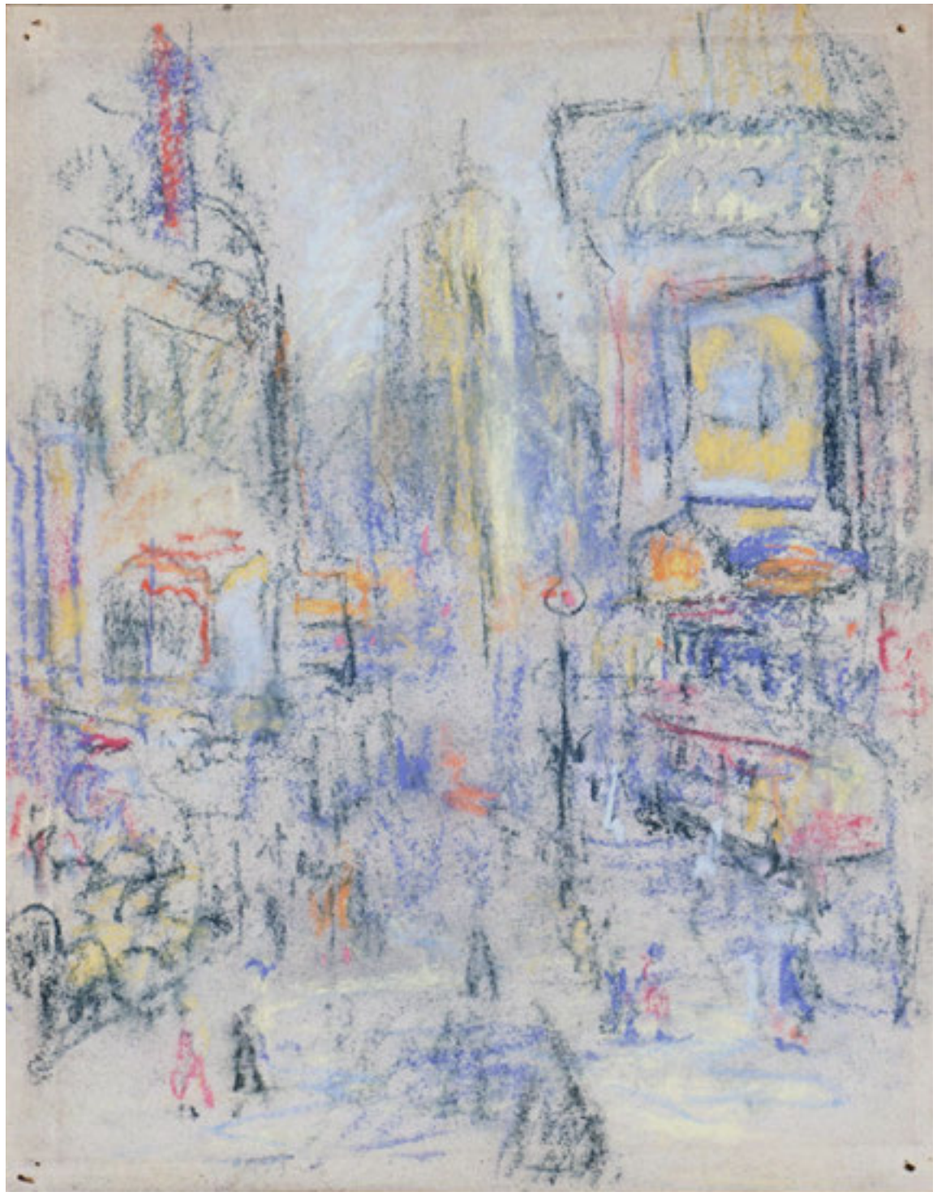
Norman Raeben, F2.5, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 50.5 cm, w. 34 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F2.6, 1932-early1950s, pastel on paper, h. 33 cm, w. 5.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

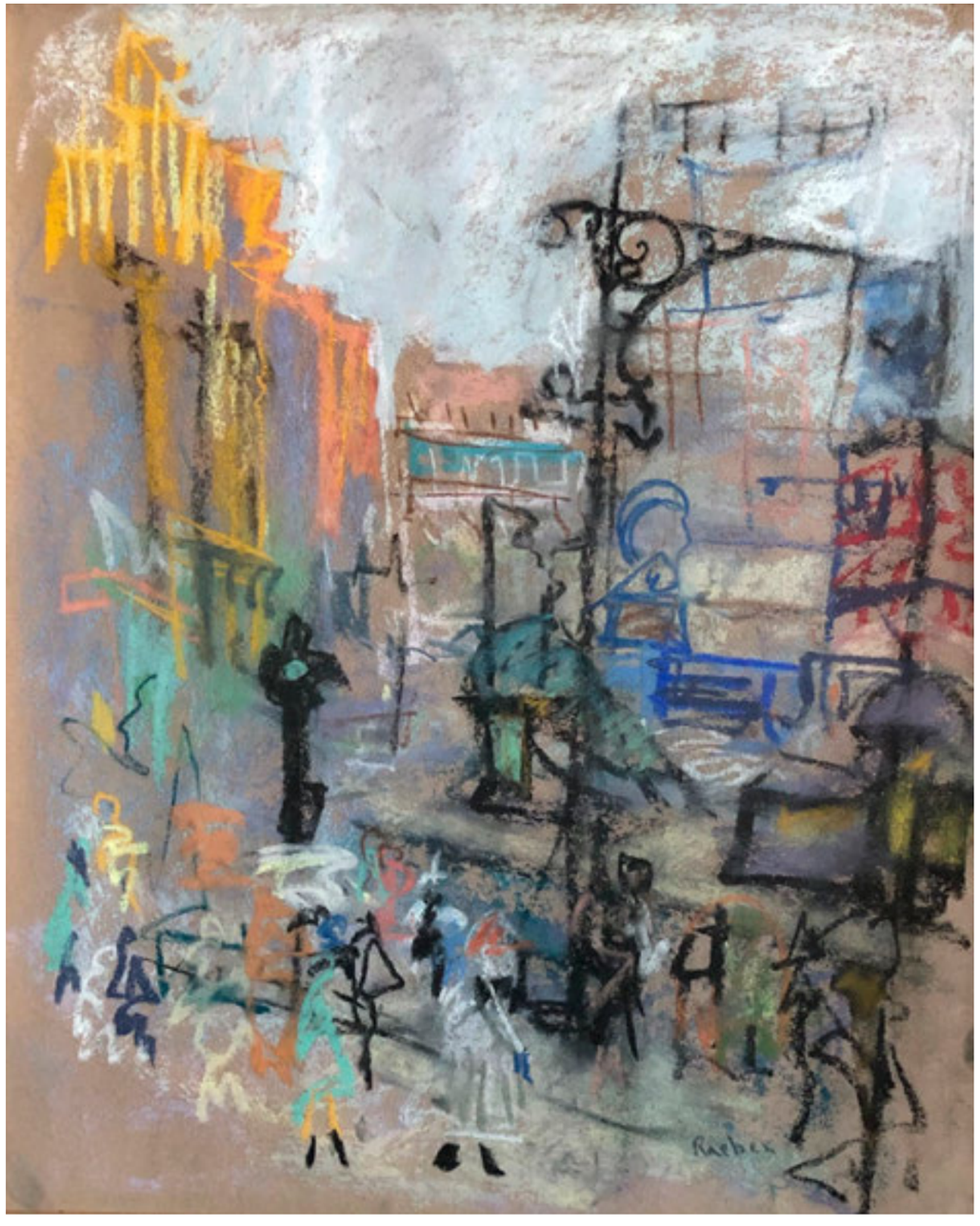
Norman Raeben, F2.7, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 51 cm, w. 32.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F3.1, 1932-early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 41.5 cm, w. 51 cm, Josh Raeben collection.

Norman Raeben, F3.2, 1932-early1950s, pastel on paper, h. 41 cm, w. 51.5 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



Norman Raeben, F3.7, 1932-early1950s, pastel on paper, h. 32 cm, w. 25 cm, Josh Raeben collection.



U.2 Norman Raeben, untitled [Paris cityscape with metro, streetlights, and figures], 1932-early 1930s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 52 cm, w. 41 cm, private collection.

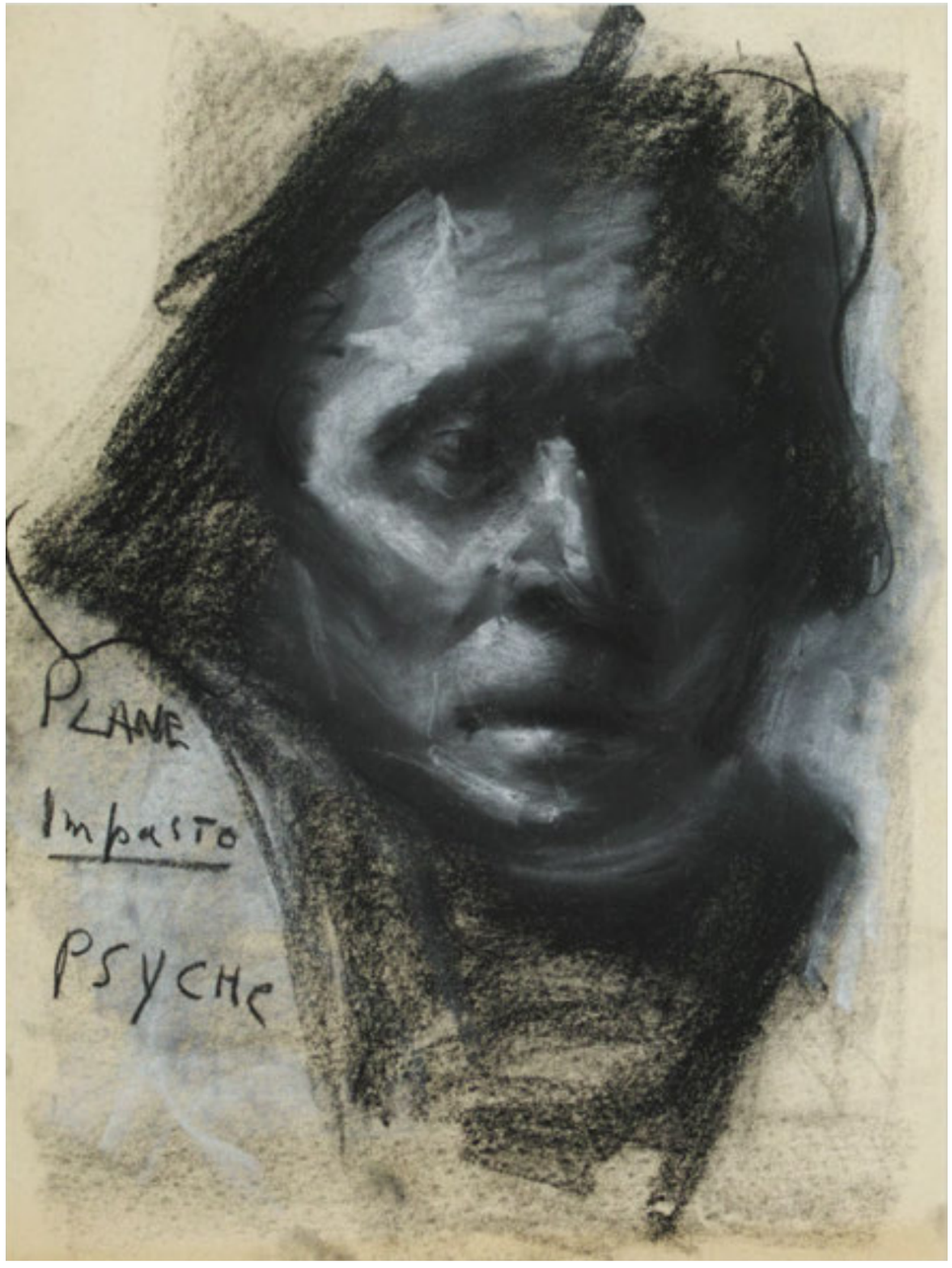
U.1 Norman Raeben, untitled [New York cityscape with cars, figures, and buildings], early 1940s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 44 cm, w. 56 cm, private collection.

U.3 Norman Raeben, untitled [cityscape in New York on 105th Broadway between Broadway and West End Avenue], late 1940s-early 1950s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 52 cm, w. 41 cm, Collection of Casey Villard.

U.4 Norman Raeben, untitled [semi-abstract cityscape with bridge and bell tower, probably in Venice], 1950s-1960s, pastel on sandpaper, h. 51 cm, w. 42 cm, private collection.

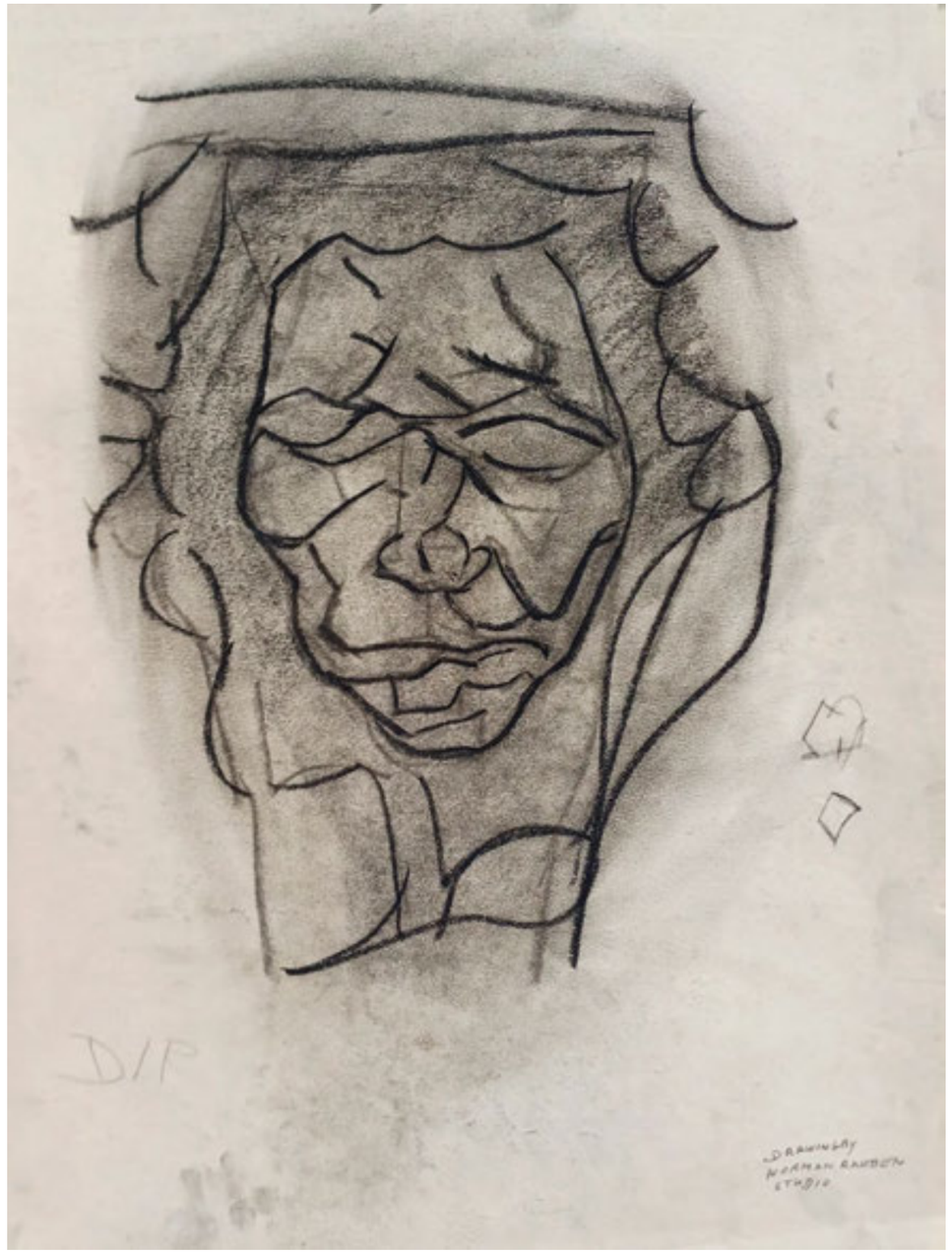
Studio Works

Norman Raeben, *Beethoven* [study of the head], 1960s, charcoal on paper, h. 61 cm, w. 46 cm, Collection of Sylvia Karchmar.



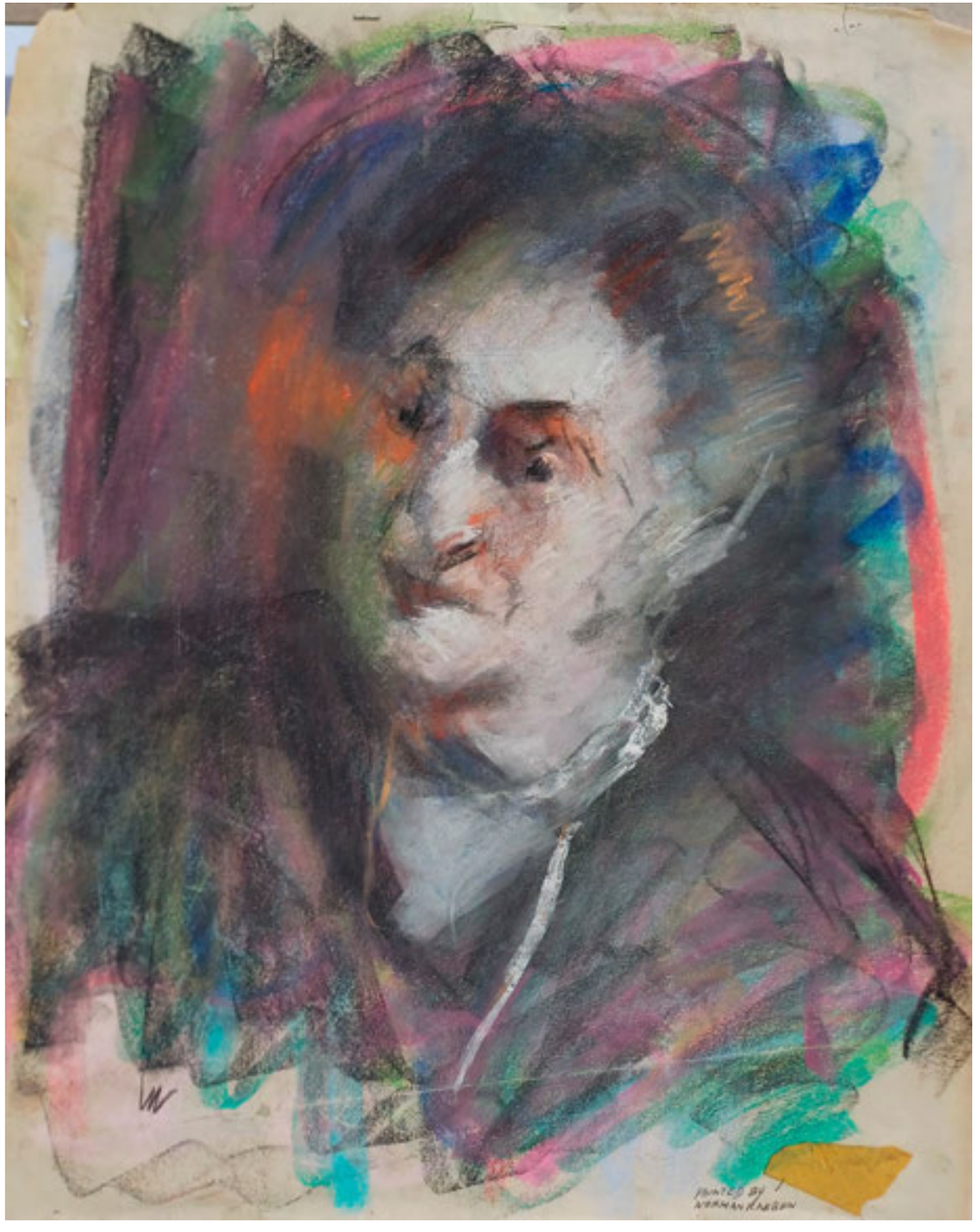
Norman Raeben, *Plane, Impasto, Psyche* [study of the head], early 1970s, charcoal on paper, h. 61 cm, w. 46 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [study of the head with young female face], early 1970s, charcoal on paper, h. 61 cm, w. 46 cm, private collection.



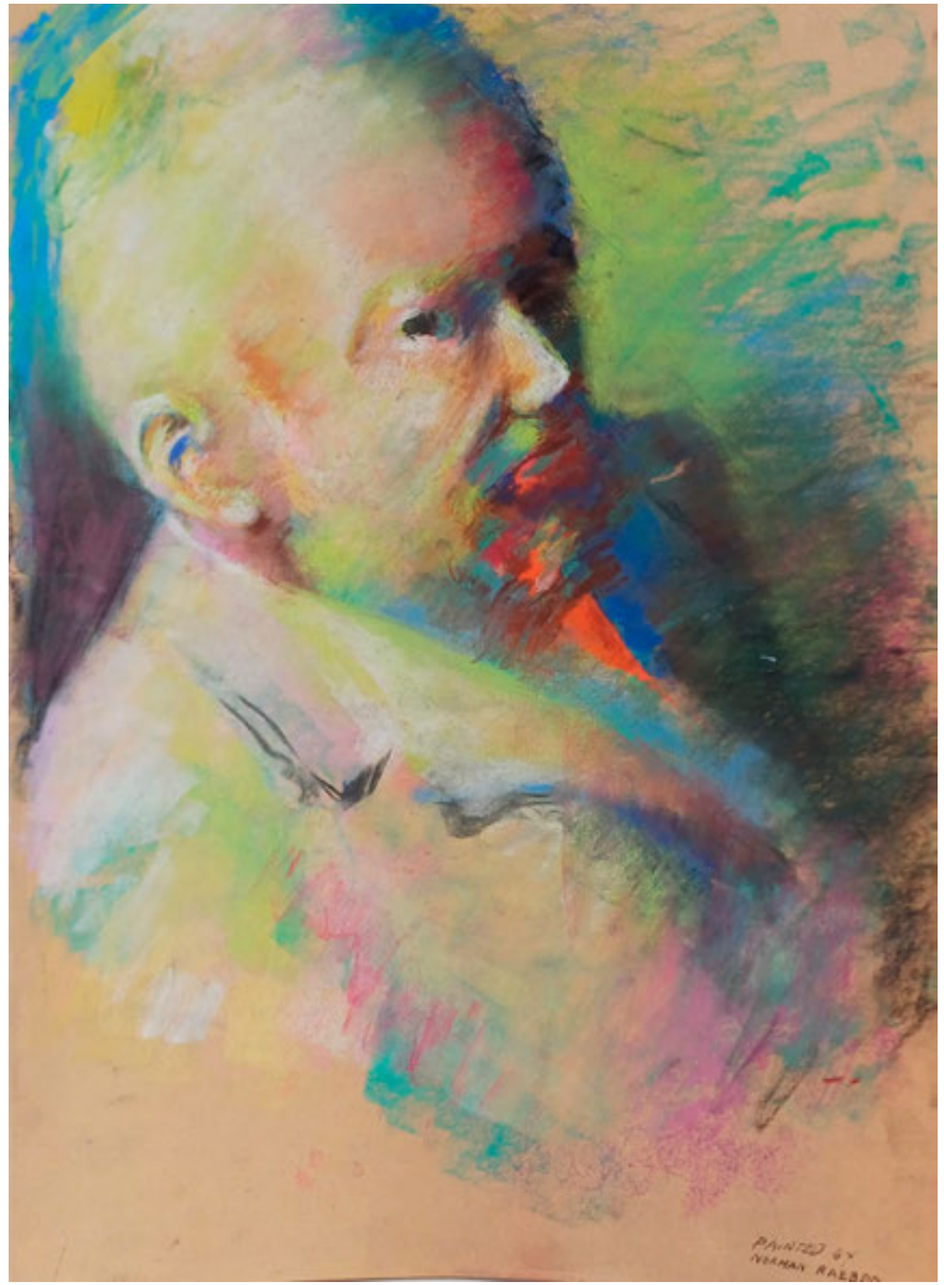
Norman Raeben, untitled [study of the head demonstration with strong lines], early 1970s, charcoal on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait demo with woman dressed in blue], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.



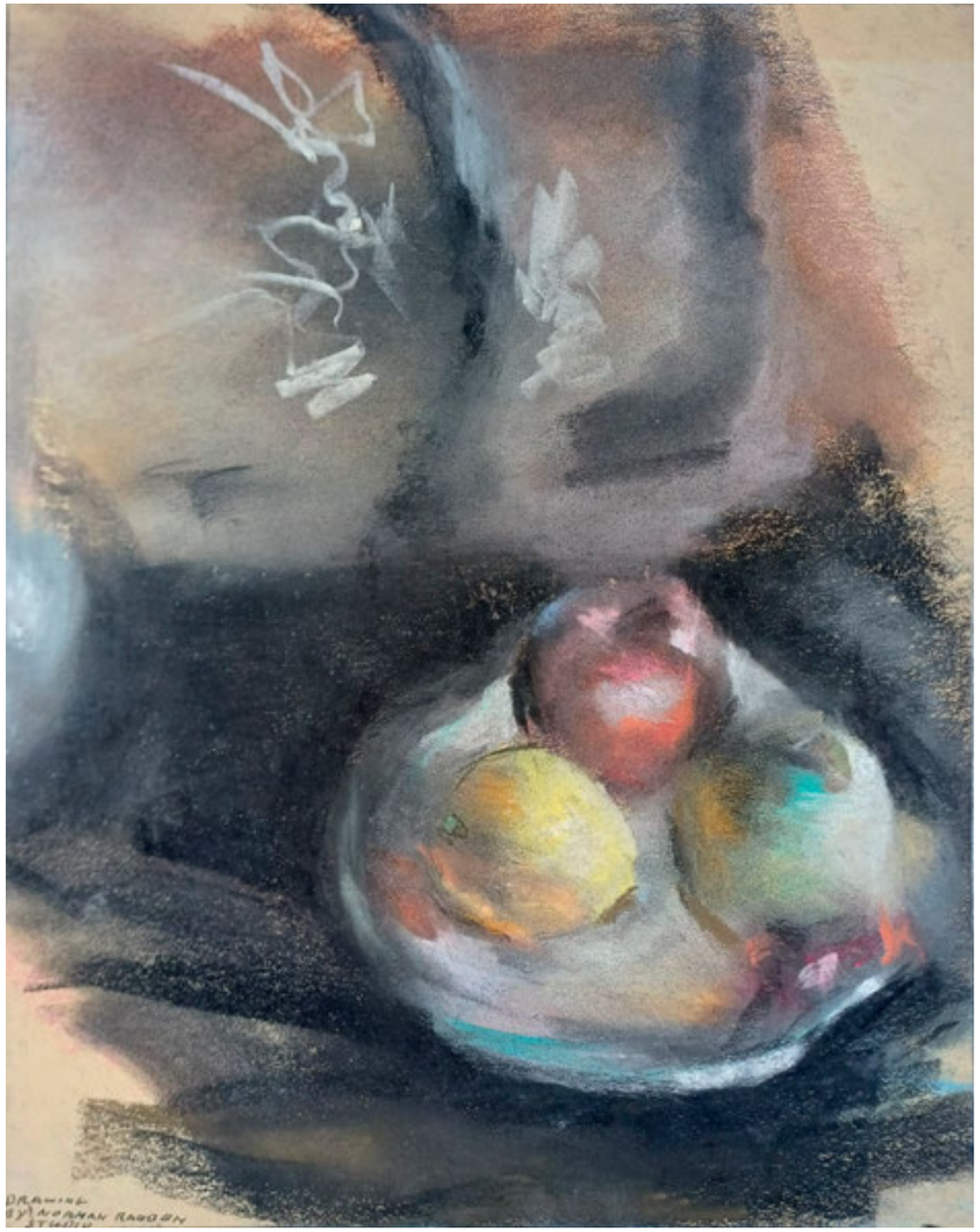
Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait demo with old man], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait demo with old man in vibrant colors], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [till life demo with bird and table], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [still life demo with cup, apple and table], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection

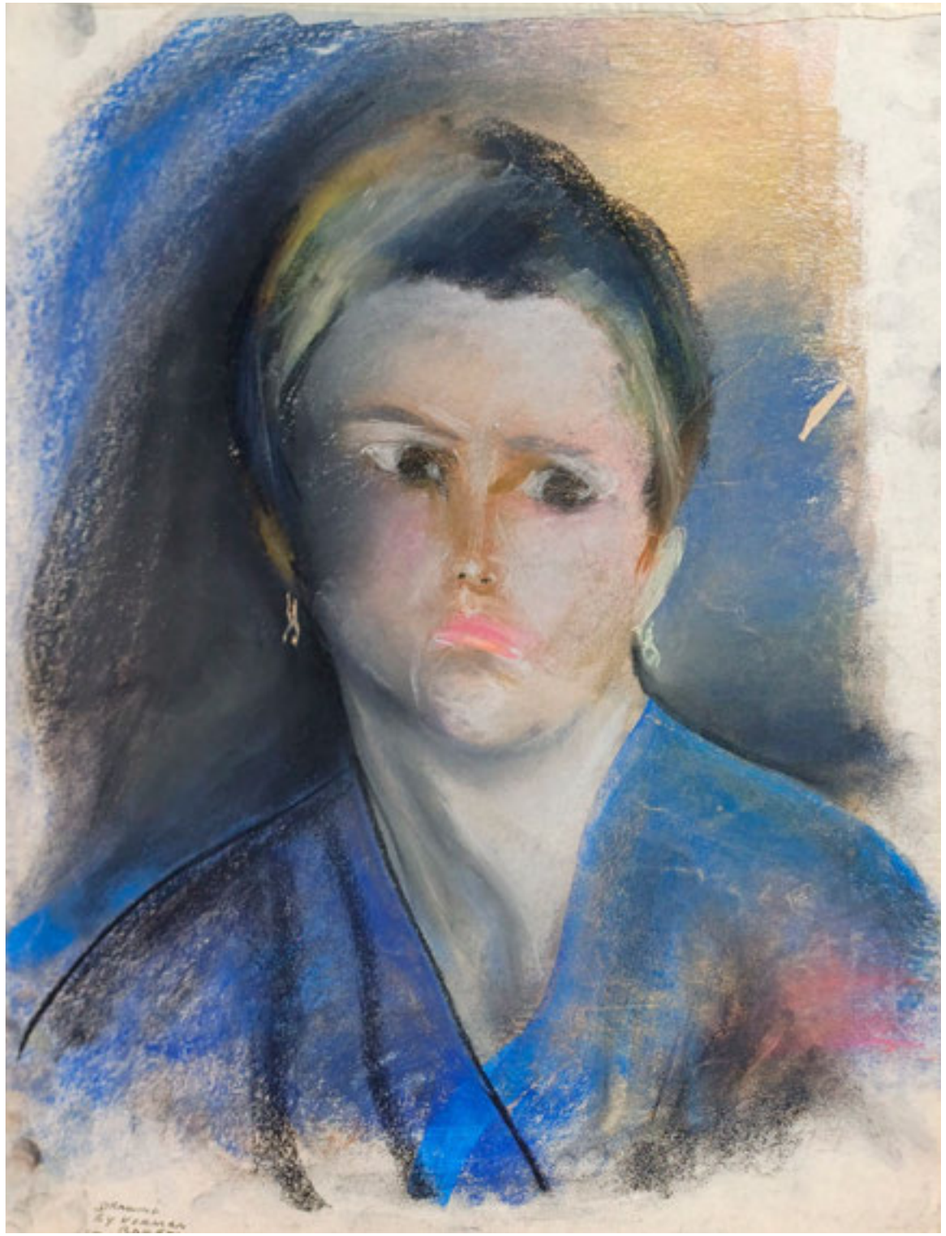


Norman Raeben, untitled [still life demo with dish and three apples], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [still life demo with table and pears], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [still life demo with multiple planes, cup, and apples], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [nude demo with kneeling woman], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait demo of a lady], early 1970s, pastel on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [nude study demonstration], early 1970s, mixed technique on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [nude study demonstration with laying woman], early 1970s, mixed technique on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [cubist demonstration with object], early 1970s, mixed technique on paper, h. 68 cm, w. 48 cm, private collection.

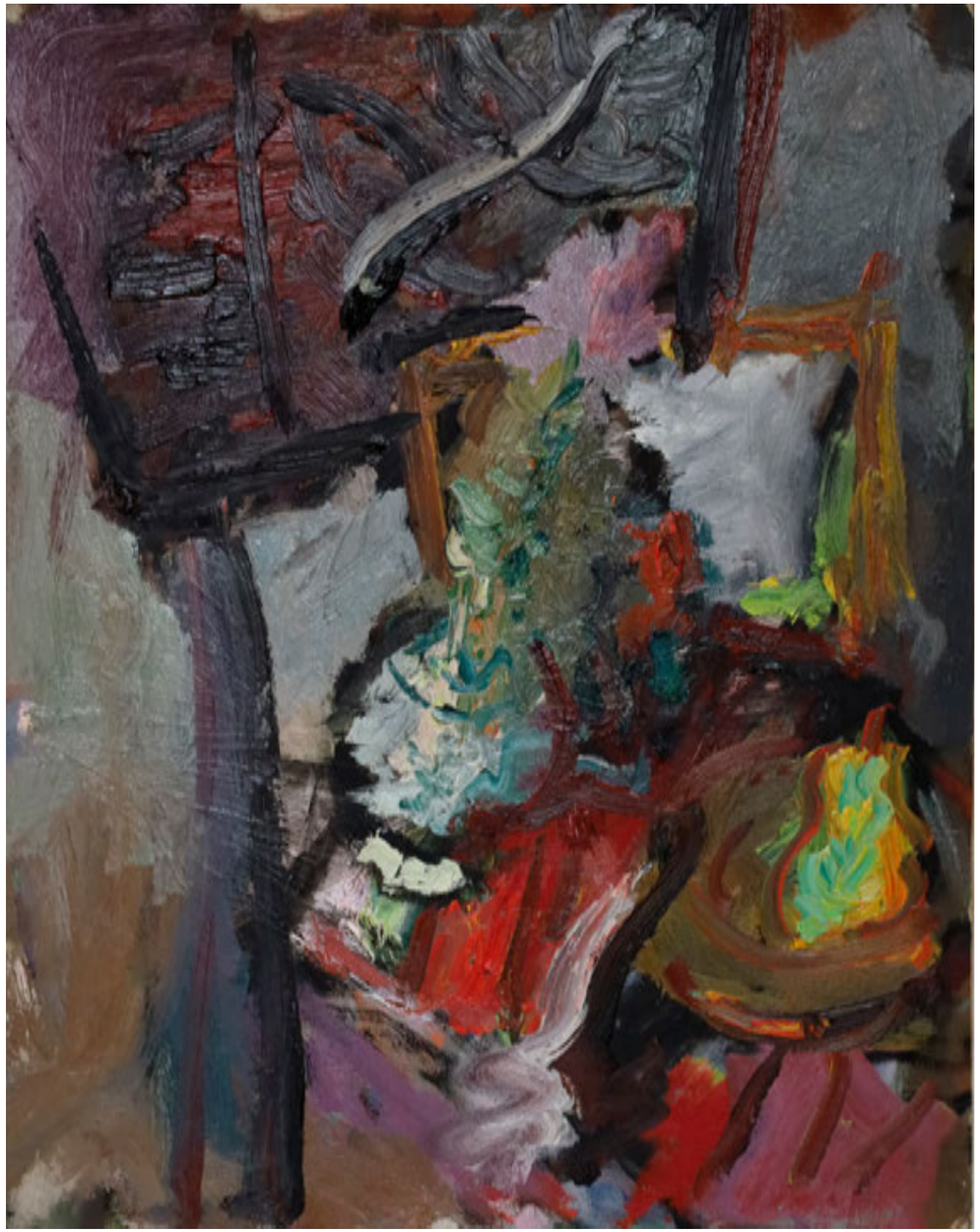
Norman Raeben, untitled [study of the head with female figure], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 55 cm, w. 45 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [study of the head with abstract male figure], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 54 cm, w. 43 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [head study with woman painted in profile], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 62 cm, w. 52 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait study with woman painted in profile], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 51 cm, w. 41 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [portrait of woman with dark hair], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 61 cm, w. 51 cm, private collection.



Norman Raeben, untitled [example of abstract painted over a student's work], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 60, w. 50 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben, untitled [demo example of abstrac painted over a student's work], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 70 cm, w. 55 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben – Irene Moshief, untitled [Irene Moshief's still life with arabesque and musical strokes painted by Raeben], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 54 cm, w. 43 cm, private collection.

Norman Raeben – Irene Moshief, untitled [Irene Moshief's portrait of male figure with strokes painted by Raeben], early 1970s, oil on canvas, h. 50 cm, w. 40 cm, private collection.

Biographical Note and Exhibitions

1901

Norman Raeben (neé Numa Rabinowitz) was born on March 21, 1901, in Kyiv, then part of the Russian Empire. He was the youngest son of Olga Loyev Rabinovich (1865-1942) and the famous Yiddish-language writer and playwright Solomon Naumovich Rabinovich (1859-1916), a.k.a Sholem Aleichem, best known for his characters Menahem-Mendl, Motl, and Tevye the milkman and his daughters, the latter of whom was the inspiration for the famous musical *The Fiddler on the Roof.*[1]

1904-1906

Following the latest in a series of pogroms against the Jewish citizens of his are, Sholem Aleichem decided to leave Russia, moving his family to various locations within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then to Italy, and finally Switzerland, where Numa, the youngest, attended his first school orders. During this time, Numa learned several languages and developed an interest in drawing by filling notebooks with caricatures and figures of soldiers.[2]

1906-1907

Numa, his mother, and father landed in New York Harbor on October 14th, 1906, while the rest of the family remained in Europe. Sholem Aleichem was welcomed as a celebrity by a wide range of intellectuals and artists in Jewish circles, including Jacob Adler, who had, over the years, invited Sholem several times to try his luck in New York's burgeoning Yiddish theater scene. As early as June of the following year, disappointed by the lack of financial and literary success they were counting on, the family returned to Europe.

In 1907, Sholem Aleichem published the first part of *Motl, Peysi the Cantor's Son*. *From Home to America*, a novel filled with autobiographical references recounting the migration affairs of Motl, an exquisitely ironic child with a natural talent for painting, who is inspired by his son.[3]

1908-1914

During this period, the young Numa resided mainly in Geneva, where he resumed his studies. Despite poor health, Sholem embarked on literary tours across Europe, in need of money. Numa occasionally followed his father,[4] who in 1908 was hospitalized following a collapse due to an acute episode of tuberculosis from which he had been suffering for some time. He recovered thanks to a long treatment period in Italy at a clinic in Nervi (Genoa).

1914

Following the outbreak of World War I, the family decided to move to New York. Numa set sail from Copenhagen, this time with both his parents and sisters, Ernestina and Marusi—a writer herself, known as Marie Waife-Golberg. His brother, Mischa, affected by tuberculosis, was forced to remain in Europe, along with his sister, Emma. Layala, married to a soldier from Odessa, also stayed in Europe.

1915

On September 19th, Numa's brother, Misha, died under tragic circumstances.

1916

On May 13th, Sholem Aleichem died at his home in the Bronx at the age of fifty-seven from complications due to tuberculosis and diabetes. The funeral was an event of national importance: over one hundred thousand attended the procession, and the author's last wishes were published in major newspapers and read in Congress. An annual family gathering was also established to commemorate the event, during which family and friends read the will and selected passages from the writer's works.

1917-1924

After spending a short time studying painting at the Educational Alliance Art School, from January 1918 to May 1924, Raeben enrolled in the Art Students League, where he studied with several influential artists, including George Bridgman, Joan Sloan, William Glackens, Robert Luks, Kenneth Hayes Miller, Max Weber, Robert Henri, and Kimon Nicolaïdes.[5] The most significant influences on the young artist were Robert Henri and Robert Luks. Many of his fellow students were, in turn, destined to become prominent artists, such as Ben Shahn, Isaac and Raphael Soyer, Chaim Gross, and Mark Rothko, among others.[6]

On December 23rd, 1922, Raeben married Miriam Newmauk. The couple postponed their honeymoon until after obtaining their naturalization so as to spend it in Europe. Partly at the suggestion of Max Weber, Numa wished to travel to Paris, to establish contacts with the pictorial avant-gardes artists of the time.

Numa made his first official debut as a painter during this period. Using his birth name, Numa Rabinowitz, he participated in several exhibitions, displaying mainly oil portraits clearly influenced by the lesson of American realism of the Ashcan School of Painting. In 1922, he participated in the sixth annual "Independents" exhibition, held from March 11th to April 2nd in Brooklyn, at the Waldorf Astoria Roof.[7] The exhibition's curators featured several of Numa's mentors, including George Bellows, Rober Henri, and John Sloan, who also served as president of the Independents Association. Raeben contributed two paintings titled "Study" and "Girl's Head," which are now untraceable. We learn from a brief review published by art critic Marie Trommer in the Yidishe Gazeten that these were "two studies of girlhood, strong in color and drawing."[8] In 1923, Raeben also displayed two oil paintings in the Annual Arts and Crafts of the Jewish Charities exhibition at the Jewish Institute in Detroit.[9]

1924-1925

In 1924, again under the name Numa Rabinowitz, the artist took part in the ninety-ninth annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York, held from November 15th to December 7th, within which he exhibited an oil portrait entitled *Shoula*.[10]

On June 24th, the Bronx County Court granted him naturalization, which his wife later received on December 2nd. Shortly thereafter, the couple obtained visas to leave for Europe. An article published on February 4th related the news of their departure for France. The article also attested that Raeben was already well known in Jewish cultural circles of the time, partly because of his father and partly because of his exhibitions, which were mentioned throughout.[11] During the following two years abroad, Raeben established relationships, primarily with avant-garde Jewish artists in the French capital. He came to know Jules Pascin and Marc Chagall, who would later work closely with his sister, Marie Waife-Goldberg, in dealing with American galleries and the press.[12] According to several student reports, Numa also met Henri Matisse around this time.[13] The most significant influence, however, was that of Chaïm Soutine.[14] Before returning to New York, Raeben and his wife travelled through different parts of the Mediterranean, including Palestine and Egypt. They left from Alexandria, Egypt, and arrived back in New York on November 21st, 1925.

1926-1931

In 1926, Miriam gave birth to their first and only son, Jay Raeben. The attribution of the surname Raeben confirms the artist's assumption of his artistic name, which Raeben would then employ until his death.[15] The same year, his studio was robbed shortly before a major exhibition.[16] The event exacerbated the neurosis from which Raeben already suffered and which plagued him for his entire existence. This condition, in turn, worsened by alcohol use, further strained an already unhappy relationship with his wife, whom he divorced in 1931.

In 1926, at the invitation of the writer Isaac Dov Berkowitz, who had married his sister Ernestina, Raeben collaborated in the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of Sholem Aleichem's death, painting one oil portrait of his father and one of his mother.[17] Both are preserved today at the Beth Shalom Aleichem Museum in Tel Aviv.

During this period, Raeben opened the first of several studios at 8 West 29th Street and began teaching painting. Most likely as a result of his father's acquaintances, Raeben at this point was well-connected in several Jewish literary and theatrical circles and knew distinguished authors and musicians such as Hayim Nahman Bialik, Maxim Gorky, Michael Chekhov, and Seymour Osborne.[18] He also preserved relationships with numerous proponents in the world of Yiddish Theater, particularly with Stella Adler, Pearl Polly Adler, Mary Adler, Miriam Kressyn, and Luba Harrington. Several of them were students of the artist, who, in turn, painted many of their portraits, all of which are now part of personal collections, except for a large oil portrait of Stella Adler kept at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York.[19] Raeben was also frequently invited to give lectures and talks on art, theater, and literature at private salons and events, an activity he would continue to conduct throughout the rest of his career.

1931 was also the year of the artist's first personal exhibitions, the inaugural taking place at the Jewish Club of New York in March and April, and the second at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association from early December to January 4th of the following year. From a review by David Mann published in *The Sentinel* magazine,[20] we understand that the first solo exhibition at the Jewish Club contained about thirty

oils, primarily views of Provincetown, Long Island, and Maine, cityscapes of Manhattan and Jaffa, and some portraits, including that of his mother.[21] The description of the works attests to the impact of the studies conducted at the Art Students League and the influence of the French school.[22] The two personal shows also garnered a few mentions in the *New York Times*, from which we learn that the second exhibition also contained, for the first time, watercolors, charcoals, and some pastels, a technique Raeben experimented with during the 1930s.[23]

1932-1933

After the exhibition, Raeben organized another trip to France, this time with artist Isador Steinberg, one of his closest friends and collaborators. In Paris, he resided in an apartment rented to him by painter Roger Bissière. There, Raeben turned his focus to the pastel technique, beginning a cycle of urban cityscapes and landscapes in which he blended the lessons of the Ashcan School of Painting with the post-impressionist and modernist philosophy. He also maintained his activity as a teacher in Paris.[24] The following year, he travelled to Palestine with his mother, where he presumably put on another exhibition.[25] On November 14th, 1933, he left Port Said with his mother to return to New York on December 1st.

1934-1945

In 1934, Raeben had two of the most important shows of his career. He participated in the "Modern Paintings and Sculpture" exhibit organized at the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association in Newark, New Jersey, from the 7th to the 14th of May. The show displayed an extensive collection of works featuring paintings by several of Raeben's acquaintances and collaborators and his major artistic influences, including Chaïm Soutine, Marc Chagall, Amedeo Modigliani, Jules Pascin, Camille Pissarro, Moïse Kisling, Arshile Gorky, Ben Shahn, Isador Steinberg, Isaac, Moses and Raphael Soyer, and Max Weber. Raeben contributed with a pastel entitled "Landscape".[26]

From October 28th to November 10th of the same year, he had a solo show at Contemporary Arts Galleries, a distinguished venue located at 41 West 54th Street. Entitled "Landscapes in Pastel," the exhibition was comprised of pastel views of New York, France, and Palestine. The collection received a few reviews in the *Forward*, the *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, and, in particular, one in the *New York Times*, in which critic Howard Devree defined the colors of his pastels as breathtaking.[27]

Within this decade, Raeben became increasingly active as a teacher, primarily in several West Village studios on Houston Street, Lower 5th Avenue, 16th Street, and, in particular, at 51 West 12th Street. Among his students were notable names such as jazz musician Bob Haggart, fashion designer Eve Tartar, painter Esther Davis, and various members of the Adler family. From January 25th to February 6th, 1937, the Guild Art Gallery held a show titled "Norman Raeben Presents an Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by His Students," which was featured in the *New York Times* and the *New York Evening Post*.[28] In April of the same year, Stella Adler hosted an exhibition of Raeben's paintings at her home.[29] During this period, Raeben frequented Allen Adler and Lulla Rosenfeld and their circle of intellectuals, which also included Stanley Moss, Joachim Probst, Ralph Fasanella and Irving Block. He also developed a relationship with Pearl Polly Adler, which came to an end as a result of a combination of his neurosis and the interference of her family. On April 8th, 1938, Raeben lost his sister Ernestina, who died in Tel Aviv.

After the outbreak of war in 1942, Raeben was drafted in the Navy and served as a linguistic expert in creating an English-French-Russian dictionary and deciphering texts and messages.

1946-1950

Raeben returned to New York after the end of the war. As a result of a particularly severe crisis that left him catatonic for a short time, he was hospitalized and treated. Following the episode, the artist decided to withdraw from a career as a professional painter and devoted himself primarily to teaching. In 1946, with Stella Adler's help, Raeben opened a studio on the 11th floor of Carnegie Hall Tower, where he taught until his death. In addition to taking painting classes, the celebrated actress and acting teacher Stella Adler regularly encouraged her students to study with Raeben, whose theories she considered essential to acquire a more comprehensive and transdisciplinary approach to the creative process. For this reason, as confirmed by Broadway singer and dancer Dorothy Bird, the composition of his classes in the early days was characterized by the presence of numerous actors and dancers, as well as musicians and singers who studied with Stella Adler or his long-time friend Seymour Osborne, almost all of whom shared an Eastern European heritage.[30]

1951-1969

In May 1951, Raeben returned to Paris, where he remained until September of the same year. To this period dates back a final cycle of city pastels that, while maintaining strong contiguity in the choice of subjects and execution, is characterized by a different approach to the use of color. Upon his return, Raeben was active primarily as a teacher and lecturer. His influence was profound, as he was often invited to salons and events to offer lectures on art history and literature, particularly the Russian novel and modernist prose. Depending on the year, the nature of his classes varied significantly in terms of both numbers and composition. The lists of students were very heterogeneous and included artists who specialized not only in painting but also in a wide variety of disciplines, as well as devotees of Jewish culture invited by relatives and acquaintances to attend his classes to rediscover their cultural roots in an artistic, laic way.

During this period, Raeben also lost two sisters: Emma Rabinovich Feigenberg, who died on January 8th, 1955, and Layla Kaufman, who passed away on December 24th, 1964.

1970-1977

In 1970, Raeben found a group of highly involved students with whom he travelled to Paris and Brittany. Upon his return, he began collaborating with some of them on a book on art history told from the artist's perspective, entitled *Behind the Veil*, as well as a series of documentaries on the same subject, directed by Bill and Robin Fertik. Both works were initially acquired by the Doubleday Multimedia company, which, due to the problematic relations between the artist and editors, terminated the contracts. Both works thus remained unfinished and unpublished. In the spring of 1974, singer-songwriter Bob Dylan attended the artist's classes for about three months, from which he drew inspiration for making the albums *Blood on the Tracks*, *Desire* and *Street Legal* and the film *Renaldo and Clara*.[31]

1978

On December 12th, 1978, Raeben suffered a heart attack, the result of complications aggravated by diabetes, and died at the age of seventy-seven in his Central Park West apartment. He was buried in Westchester Hills Cemetery Hastings-on-Hudson in Westchester County. Although the family intended to keep the funeral private, numerous artists and students attended the ceremony, and various intellectuals and writers such as Stella Adler, Seymour Osborne, and Bel Kaufman spoke.

[1] Information about the artist's early years is drawn from various biographies of Sholem Aleichem and his works and letters, family interviews, and Ellis Island archives documents.

[2] D. Mann, "Portrait of an Artist," in *The Sentinel*, 10-04-1931, p. 7.

[3] Sholem Aleichem, *Motl, Peysi the Cantor's Son. From Home to America*, New York, Henry Schuman, 1953 (I 1907).

[4] From the book *Sholem Aleichem Panorama*, we learn that Raeben especially "spent much of his boyhood in Switzerland and Italy, travelling also in Germany and Denmark" (M.W. Grafstein, ed., *Sholom Aleichem Panorama*, London (Ontario), The Jewish Observer, 1948, p. 306).

[5] Significantly, among Raeben's primary reading advice, R. Henri's *The Art Spirit* and K. Nicolaïdes' *The Natural Way to Draw* always stand out.

[6] Information on this topic is drawn from research conducted at the Art Students League archives, interviews with various students, and materials held in Norman Raeben's personal collection, now part of the collection of Josh Raeben.

[7] Society of Independent Artists, *1922 Catalogue of the Sixth Annual Exhibition of the Society of Independent Artist*, New York, Society of Independent Artists, 1922.

[8] M. Trommer, "Jewish Artist Show up Well at Independents' Exhibition," in *Yidishe Gazeten*, 28-04-1922, p. 16.

[9] The information comes from the article "Jewish Institute Exhibition Excels Two Previous Ones," in *The Detroit Jewish Chronicle*, 23-02-1923, p. 1.

[10] National Academy of Design, *1924 Illustrated Catalogue of The Winter Exhibition*, New York, National Academy of Design, 1924, p. 13.

[11] The article also corroborates the reasons for the trip: "They sailed on the Cunard liner Aquitania for a two-year stay in France, where Mr. Rabinowitz, an artist, will complete his studies" ("Pair Wed Two Years Start on Honeymoon," in *The Macon News*, 04-02-1925).

[12] J. L. Huttner, *Tevye's Daughters: No Laughing Matter*, New York, FF2 Media, 2014, p. 38. Valuable information can also be found on renowned artist and fashion designer Eve Tartar's website, who took painting lessons from Raeben in Paris: https://www.evetartar.com (last consulted on 26-09-2024).

[13] While no concrete corroborating evidence could be found, the fact appears plausible because of their mutual friendship with Max Weber, who was among the first to introduce Raeben to European art and particularly French painting. A New Yorker by birth, Weber traveled to France in the early twentieth century, where he met Pablo Picasso and

Georges Braque, and he helped found and attended Henri Matisse's school of painting. Returning to the Big Apple in 1909, he collaborated with several members of the Ashcan School, helping to spread the Cubist style in America through his art and lecturing at various institutions. For a more detailed account of these connections, see P. North, *Max Weber: American Modern*, New York, Jewish Museum, 1982.

[14] C. Carr Levy, "Norman Raeben," in A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi, M.A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts Songs, Film, Painting, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, p. 191. It is also relevant to point out that, in the audio of some of his lectures, Raeben speaks of Soutine as a mentor and claims to have lived in the same neighborhood.

[15] We learn from an article published in *The Sentinel* magazine in 1931 that the choice was determined by the artist's desire to emancipate himself from his cumbersome father figure, with whom he was constantly associated and compared (J. Salmark, "Review of the Jewish Week. Afraid of a Good Name," in *The Sentinel*, 03-04-1931, p. 2).

[16] Besides being mentioned in several interviews with the artist's students, the information is also recorded in a brief chronology of Raeben's career compiled by his son, now held in Josh Raeben's personal collection. From an article in the *Macon News* cited above, we learn that the show may have been the 1926 National Academy of Design annual exhibition.

[17] Y. D. Berkowitz, ed. by, *Dos Shalom Aleichem Bukh das shulem Aleychem buch*, New York, The Shalom Aleichem Book Committee, 1926.

[18] Concerning his relations with Bialik and Gorky, see M. Waife-Goldberg, *My Father, Sholem Aleichem*, New York-London, Simon and Schuster, 1968. The rest of the information comes from an interview with Steven Osborne, son of opera singer and Broadway teacher Seymour Osborne, and materials kept in his personal archive.

[19] This information is drawn from Raeben's personal diaries and notebooks and from interviews with students and family members of the actresses.

[20] D. Mann, "Portrait of an Artist," in *The Sentinel*, 10-04-1931, p. 7.

[21] The portrait gained considerable attention, so much so that it garnered two additional mentions in the same magazine, which devoted the article *The Jewish Mother* and the entire front cover page of the May 1931 issue to it. See M. Selikowitz, "The Jewish Mother," in *The Sentinel*, 10-05-1931, p. 6 and *The Sentinel*, 08-05-1931, front page.

[22] Mann writes: "Raeben's brush catches the atmosphere rather than the outlines. It creates depth rather than form. […] Raeben's street scenes of Jaffa or Manhattan are just as unpretentious. A chunk of life sketched in realistic colors without regard to composition." D. Mann, "Portrait of an Artist," in *The Sentinel*, 10-04-1931, p. 7.

[23] E.L. Cary, "Modern Textile Design. Developments Are Found Corresponding to Changes in the World of Human Events," in *The New Times*, 15-03-1931, p. 123; E.A. Jewell, "Items of Interest," in *The New York Times*, 20-12-1931, p. 10.

[24] "Eve Tatar Exhibit Shown on Campus," in *The Santa Clara*, 02-03-1967, p. 6.

[25] It has not yet been possible to find reliable information about this exhibition, which is mentioned in some interviews by Raeben's students and in the article "Aleichem's Son Dies," in *The Australian Jewish Times*, 08-03-1979, p. 10. Student John Amato reports that Raeben also exhibited in Paris at The American Center, another information that needs to be verified.

[26] J.E. Precker, A.M. Canter, I.N. Steinberg, eds., *Modern Paintings and Sculpture. May 7th to 14th, 1934*, Newark, New Jersey, Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, 1934.

[27] H. Devree, "Highlights in the Reviewer's Week," in *The New York Times*, 04-11-1934, p. 10.

[28] "Reception to Open Exhibit by Women," in *New York Evening Post*, 23-01-1937, p. 15 and H. Devree, "A Reviewer's Notebook: Brief Comment on Some of the Newly Opened Exhibitions," in *New York Times*, 31-01-1937, p. 165.

[29] P. Biron, "Strictly Confidential," in *The Sentinel*, v. 147, no. 4, 24-04-1937, p. 8.

[30] D. Bird and J. Greenberg, *Bird's Eye View: Dancing with Martha Graham and on Broadway*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997, p. 231.

[31] For a detailed account of Raeben's influence on Bob Dylan, see A. Carrera, *La voce di Bob Dylan. Un racconto dell'America*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 2011, pp. 296-310; S. Wilentz, *Bob Dylan in America*, New York, Anchor Books, 2011, pp. 137-139; F. Fantuzzi, "Cenni di ermeneutica ebraica nelle teorie di Norman Raeben, figlio di Scholem Aleichem e maestro di Bob Dylan," in F. Fantuzzi, ed. by, *Tales of Unfulfilled Times. Saggi critici in onore di Dario Calimani offerti dai suoi allievi*, Venice, Edizioni Ca' Foscari, 2017, pp. 53-78; F. Fantuzzi, "Painting Songs, Composing Paintings. Norman Raeben and Bob Dylan," in A. Carrera, F. Fantuzzi and M. A. Stefanelli, eds., *Bob Dylan and the Arts. Songs, Film, Painting, and Sculpture in Dylan's Universe*, Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020, pp. 209-232; F. Fantuzzi, "'No Time to Think': il tempo tra arte e canzone," in *L'Ulisse*, Vol. 26, 2023, pp. 237-251; and F. Fantuzzi, "Songwriting Tradition and the Interpretative Talent," in *Cahiers de littérature orale*, no. 94, 2023, pp. 31-54.

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painted by Norman Raeben