

GÉZA NÉMETH

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THE WORLD BANK ART SOCIETY

1818 H STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20433



GÉZA NÉMETH: THE PRIMACY OF THE COSMIC

In modern times, there has been art that stirs the intellect—consider the Minimalism and Conceptualism of the early 1970s in New York. Then there has been art that stirs the passions, from Picasso's *Guernica* to a de Kooning woman—and much current Neo-Expressionism fits this description. Finally, and the most intriguingly, there has been art that—to use a grand old American cliché that is nonetheless accurate—fires the imagination. There isn't much art of this kind around in today's galleries, but Géza Németh is seeing to it that it gets more of an airing, here and now.

It has not always been so with this artist. Németh—born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1944, and trained, coincidentally, as an architect

– was in the late ‘70s to the early ‘80s concerned primarily with deploying in illusionistic technique to paint what could only be visually apprehended as “abstract” realities—icy boulders incised with primitive markings, covered, often, by cloth or paper ripped and folded back on itself to reveal more stone beneath. Németh was, in a sense, a kind of trompe l’œil painter along the lines of the 19th-century American Peto and Harnett—but of subjects that did not easily give up their personality or identity, no matter how representational they seemed. The imagination was only partially concerned; the intellect also had to be called into play to infer meaning, to rouse sensibility.

Then, from the later ‘80s on, what might be called an aesthetic warming trend began to set in. Other than rock- or cloth- or paper-like figures began to emerge—a Henry Mooresque stone body (sans head) or what might be a babe in swaddling clothes, in two instances. What was coming to be at stake was what we’ve indicated—painting that would not only tease, but fire the imagination. Németh’s visual world was opening up, and, with it, his vision.

But as the figurative has become more apparent, so has the style become more abstract. It’s almost as if a more liberated handling of paint and a far more fluid brushstroke have loosened up the painter’s imagination, as well. Content, as ever in modern times, follows form, and the form is free and energetic, the content describing itself—even locating itself—within that freedom and energy.

And what is the content? Németh is a soft-spoken man who doesn’t easily commit himself to any definite readings of his paintings, but admits that “I start from landscape in almost all my recent work.” The landscape in this case is not just terrestrial, but cosmic—in one canvas, orange slashes of paint sit above black and icy blue slashes, delineating a sunset as it might be seen from Jupiter rather than

earth. Animals and humans appear, but the landscape is of elemental import. Landscape is, after all, the site of all reality, and the site of all dream.

And our imaginations are truly, deeply fired, as in dreams. Consider, as a final subject, a recent acrylic called Arch of Light. On an outjutting of what would seem to be a red ledge adrip with purple verticals and horizontals sits the figure of a woman, her back to us, in deep red dress and blue hair with white scumbling. Around her, just beneath her, is a pale blue halo; against this, and receding into infinite distance, is a giant blue orb, set off by large inner orbs of hot yellows and reds. We see an earth within a cosmos, suns within a sun, with a human being as its awed and awesome focus and locus, the element against which the cosmic is to be measured. Do not be afraid, Németh seems to be saying, of the universe. The universe is not impersonal. It is scientifically formidable, but aesthetically approachable, through the liberated artistic imagination. Set Németh's own recently liberated imagination to work, and even the fires of heaven are not out of reach, while bulls and birds become both myths of themselves and hearty, poignant realities.

GERRIT HENRY

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EDUCATION

1969 Graduated as architect, Technical University, Budapest
1962 Graduated from the School of fine Arts, Budapest

GRANTS AND ARTISTS ASSOCIATIONS

1985-86 Awarded one year grant to paint in new York City
1979 Member of the Hungarian Artists's Association

ONE MAN SHOWS

1988 The World Bank Art Society, Washington, D.C.
 (Awarded one person show in an International
 Competition)
1986 Esta Robinson Contemporary Art, New York City
1986 Ariel Gallery, New York City
1985 Brucato Art Gallery, Scarsdale, New York
1982 Bástya Gallery, Budapest
1982 Vizivárosi Gallery, Budapest
1982 Gallery Young Artists, Budapest
1975 Kassák Gallery, Budapest
1972 KFKI Gallery, Budapest

GROUP SHOWS

- 1988 NIPPON CLUB Gallery, 37th St., New York City
(two men show)
- 1987 Gateway Center, Newark, New Jersey
- 1987 Ariel Gallery New York City
- 1987 Musée de Petit Format, Belgium
- 1986 Ariel Gallery, New York City, Three men show
- 1986 Ariel Gallery, New York City
- 1985 Brucato Art Gallery, Scarsdale, New York
- 1983 Bástyá Gallery, Budapest
- 1983 Graphic Biennial of Miskolc
- 1983 National Exhibition of Fine Arts, Múcsarnok, Budapest
- 1983 Vizivárosi Gallery, Budapest
- 1980 Gallery of Young Artists, Budapest
- 1979 Kassák Gallery, Budapest
- 1977 Gallery of Young Artists, Budapest
- 1976 Polytechnical University, Budapest
- 1976 Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest
- 1975 Kassák Gallery, Budapest
- 1973 Chapel Gallery, Balatonboglár
- 1972 ELTE Eötvös Club, Budapest
- 1971 Átkelő étterem, Visegrád
- 1971 Gallery of Young Artists, Budapest
- 1971 Hunyadi János House of Culture, Budapest
- 1970 ELTE Eötvös Club, Budapest

WORKS IN PUBLIC COLLECTION

The Hungarian Embassy
Ferenczy Museum – Szentendre, Hungary
Modern Magyar Képtár, Pécs – Pécs, Hungary
Museum of Bács-Kiskun County – Kecskemét, Hungary
Musée de Petit Format, Belgium
Brucato Art Gallery, New York

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Mozgó Világ	1987. 7. Budapest, Hungary
Hevesi Szemle	1987. 2. Eger, Hungary
Hevesi Szemle	1986. 5. Eger, Hungary
Ars Una Studió	1986. Budapest, Hungary
Art Speak	1986. June, New York
Art World	1986. May, New York
Art Speak	1986. February, New York
Art Speak	1985. September New York

BLUE CACTUS

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 66 inches



NO ARRIVAL

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 68 inches



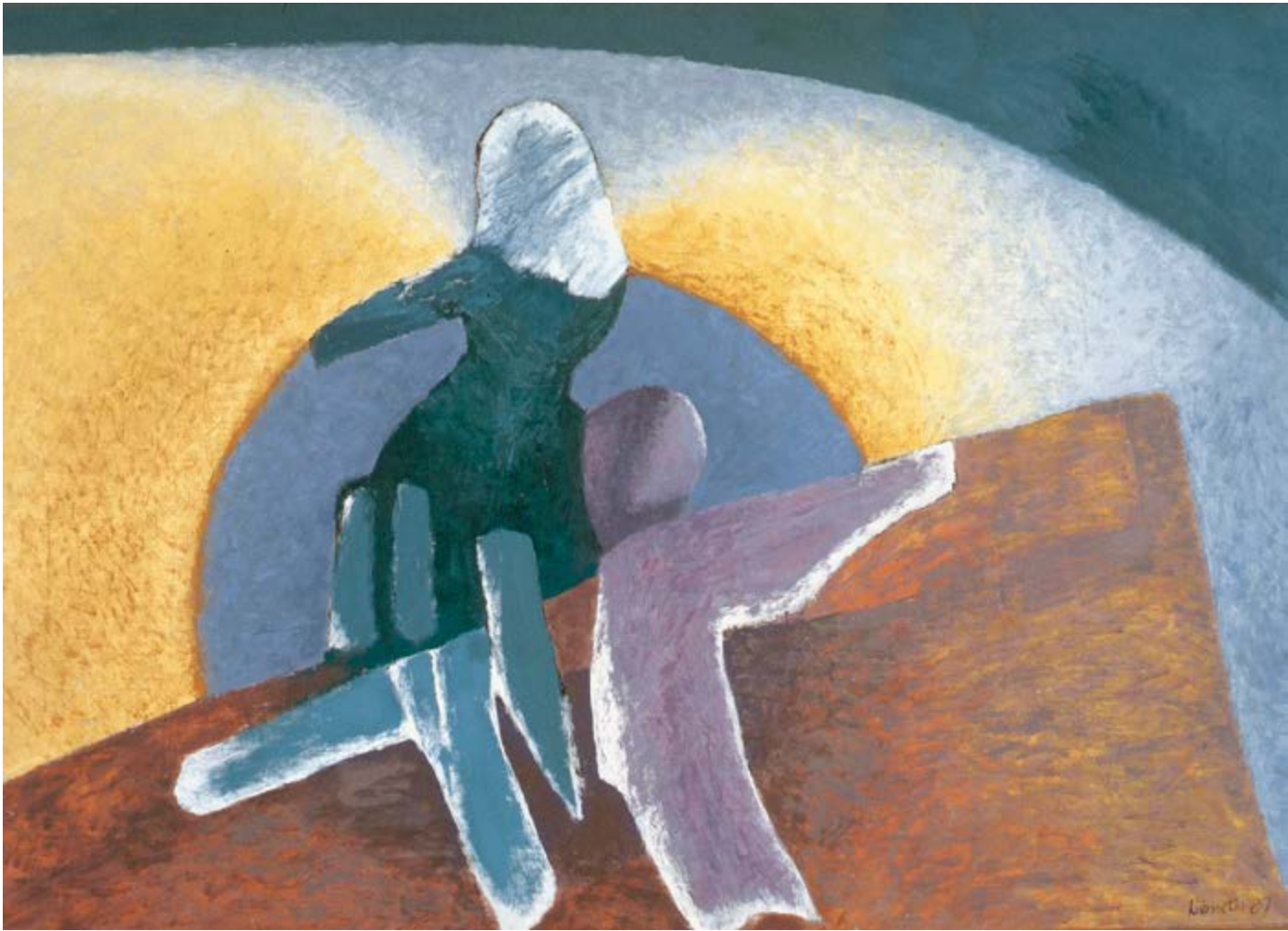
IDOL

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 70 inches



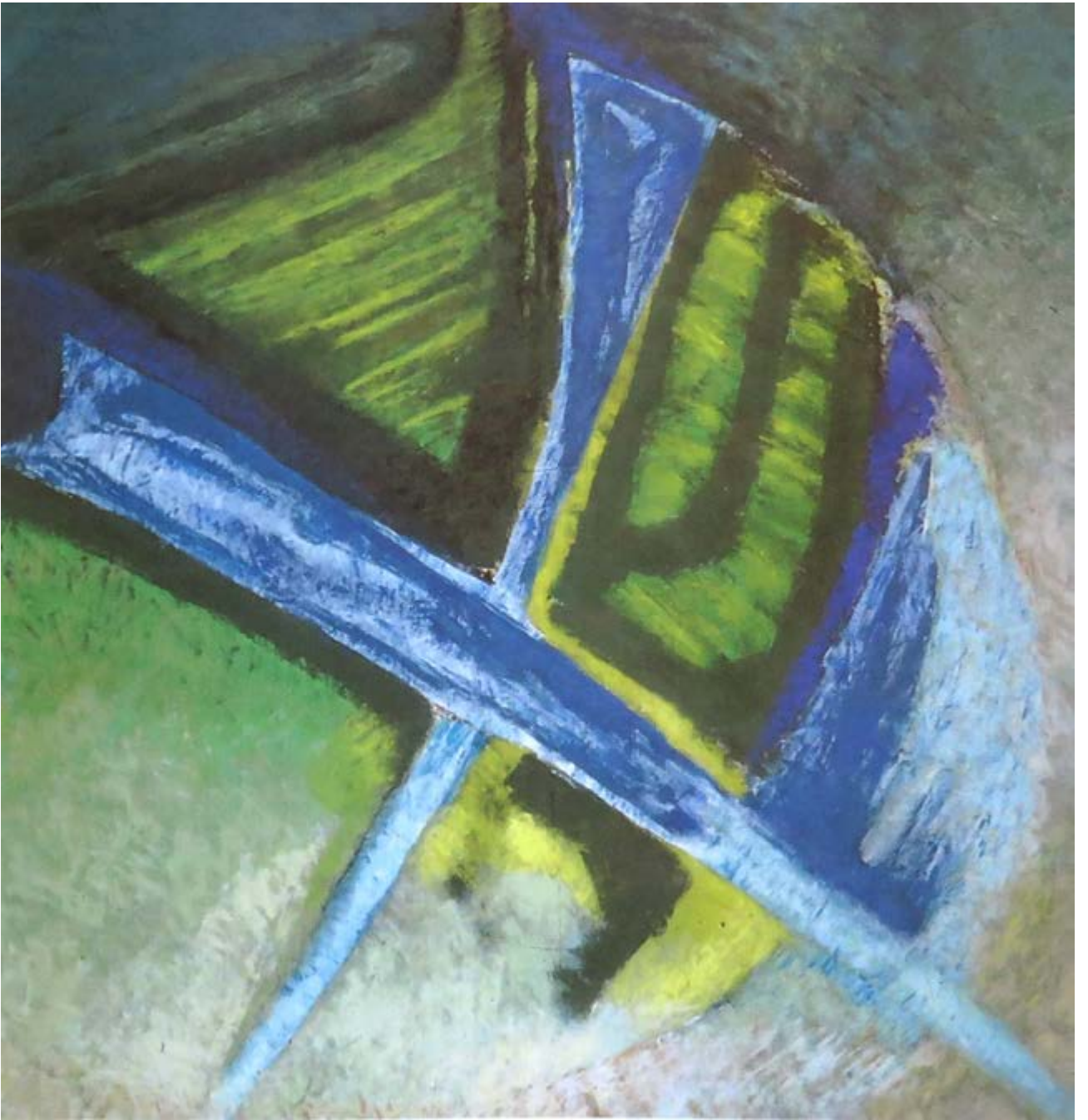
ARCH OF LIGHT
1987. acrylic on canvas
50 x 70 inches



GREEN FIELDS

1987. acrylic on canvas

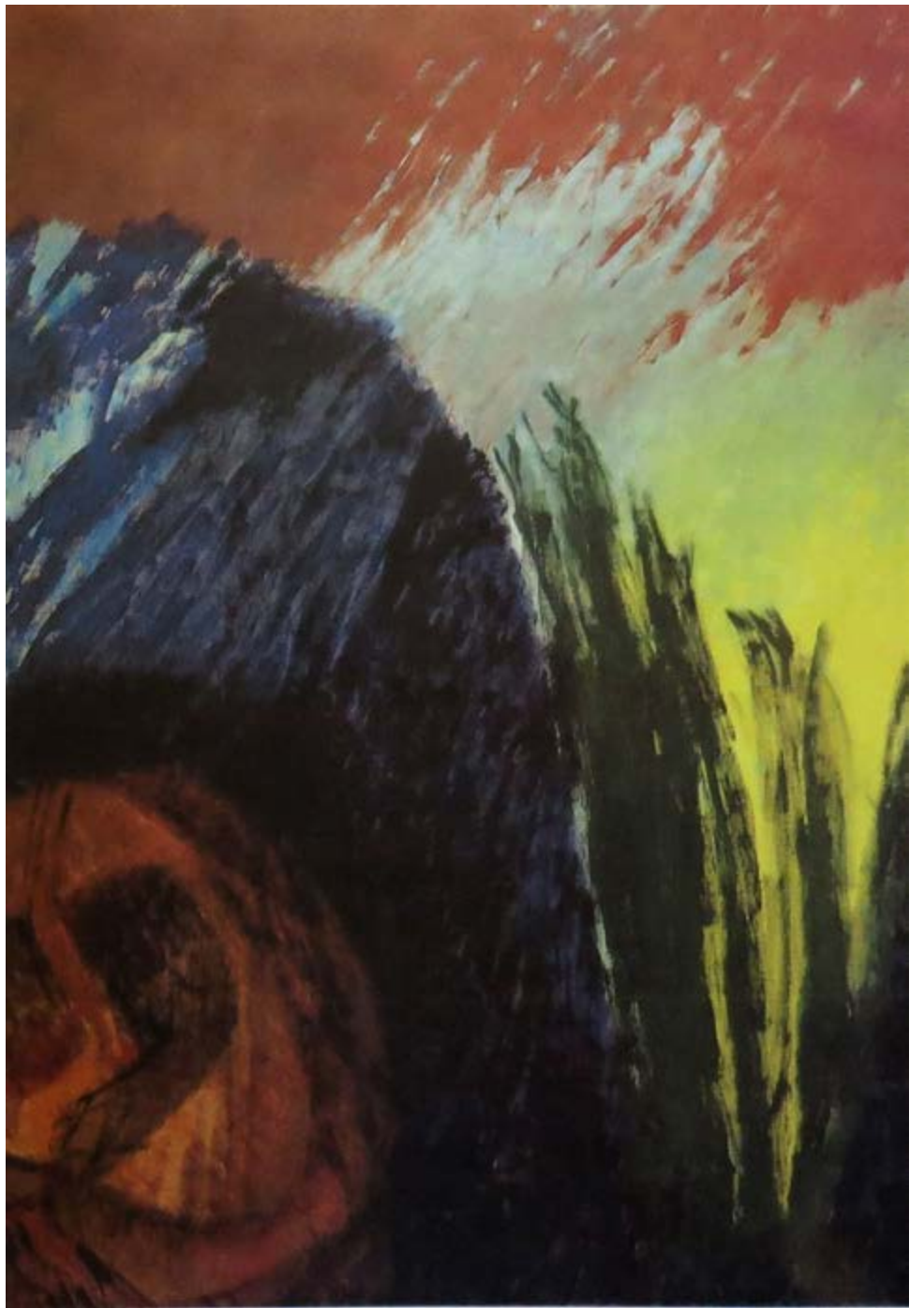
52 x 50 inches



HIDDEN

1987. acrylic on canvas

52 x 36 inches



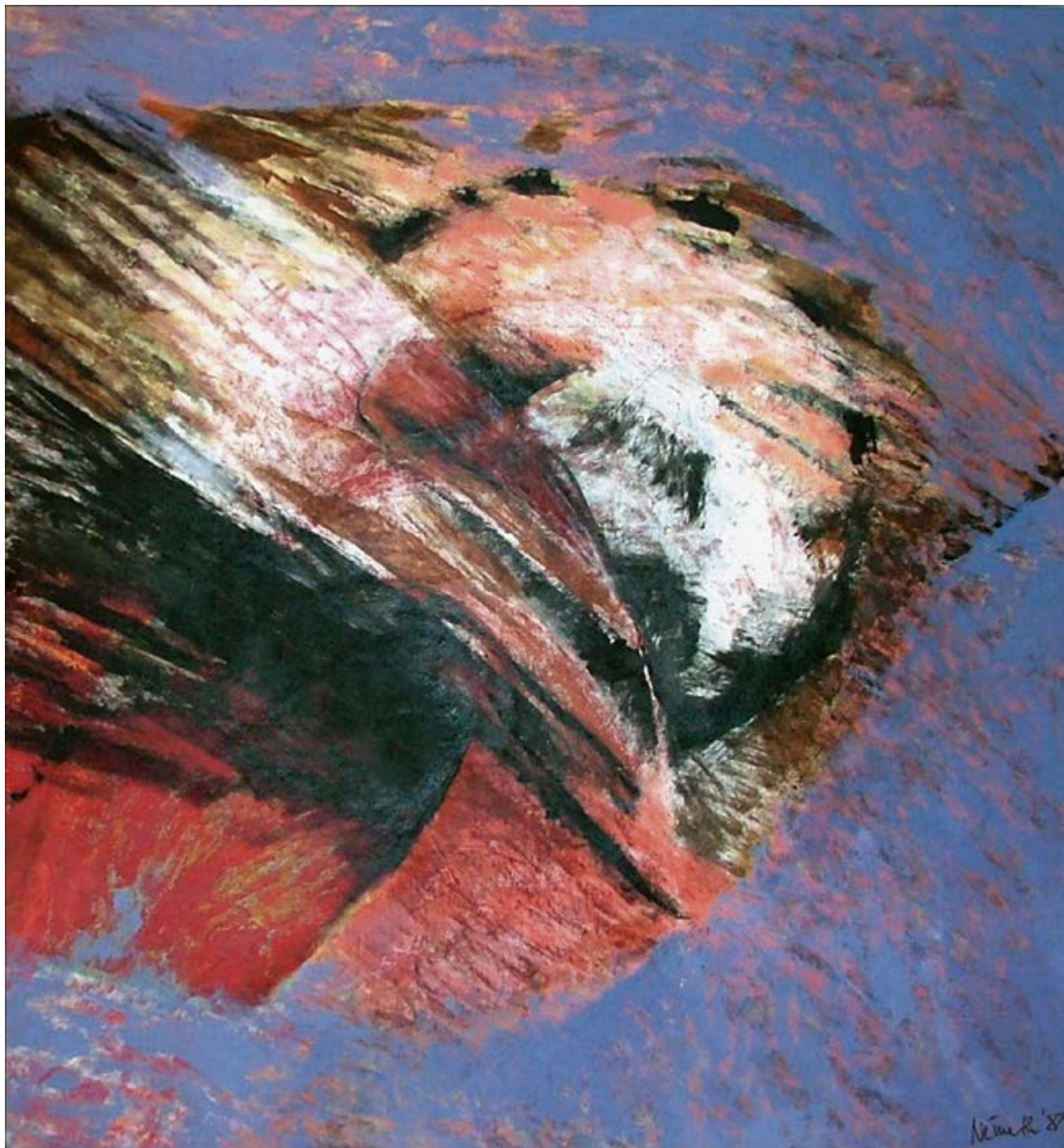
BLUE BUTTERFLY
1987. acrylic on canvas
46 X 68 inches



EAGLE

1987. acrylic on canvas

54 X 50 inches



BURNING BRIGHT
1987. acrylic on canvas
38 X 52 inches



BULL

1987. acrylic on canvas

40 x 52 inches



LAGOON

1987. acrylic on canvas

40 X 54 inches



STORM

1987. acrylic on canvas

40 x 52 inches



GREY SUN

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 80 inches



SPLIT

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 72 inches



VERGE

1987. acrylic on canvas

50 x 50 inches



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