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THE ART OF ALFONSAS DARGIS

Alfonas Dargis was born in Lithuania but has made his home in the United States since 1951. From 1929 to 1936 he studied art in Lithuania, and from 1936 to 1940 he studied under a Lithuanian state scholarship at the Art Academy in Vienna. Before coming to the United States he worked as stage designer at a number of European theaters.

Since his arrival in the United States, he has won a number of significant awards such as the Lilian Fair-child Memorial Annual Award of the University of Rochester and the Juror's Show Award at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, both in 1961.

He has participated in group exhibitions in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Germany, Austria, Italy, Canada, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and the U.S.A. He has had one-man shows in New York City, Rochester, Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, Toronto and Huntington, W. Va., as well as in Germany, at the Boisseree Gallery in Köln (Cologne) and at the Lore Dauer Art Salon in Mannheim.

His works are owned by the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, New York, the Museum of Fine Art in Dallas, Texas, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Huntington Galleries in Huntington, W. Va., the University of Delaware, the University of Nebraska, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Louis, Mo. He also has works in the Vincent Price collection and in the Washington National Library.

His works are privately owned in Lithuania, Austria, Germany, France, England, India, Mexico, Sweden, Canada, and the United States.

After the war, when he moved from Communist occupied East Germany to Göttingen, his talent was soon noticed. That same year the Deutsche Gewerkschaft Zeitung art critic wrote about him: "It wasn't by accident that I met Alfonso Dargis. He is considered one of Göttingen's foremost graphic artists. When I visited him in his one room apartment I found him crouched over a hunk of wood preparing it for printing. His walls were covered with graphics and enchanting paintings. Even though he lived in Germany for many years he still got his inspiration from the fathomless reservoir of Lithuanian Folk Art."

When he moved to the United States he was immediately noticed as one of the better artists of this country.

In a critique of an art show involving seven artists The Milwaukee Journal wrote: "The strongest of the artists is Alfonso Dargis, whose nine color woodcuts preserve an individuality of their own. His "Crucifixion" stretches the gaunt figure on the cross, twists the head upward and covers the body with black on black lines. "Girl and Bull" is a strictly modern interpretation of the old Europe myth."

"Dargis has a leathery texture in his inks that is most unusual and that lends great strength as well as surface interest to his work. What catches the eye is the bold use of color areas and simplified forms. The forms almost constitute a kind of shorthand for the subjects. The colors constitute a personal palette. A pale blue is cast against an olive or a brown with purples and green in the background."

Rochester art critic Jean Walrath was fascinated with many of Alfonso Dargis' works: "His compositions of many small forms, each form in itself a work of art in paint, and altogether suggestive of mosaics of translucent glass, and yet not like glass. It can only be paint, applied, I think, as no other painter does it."

"However, the quality that most of all draws one to Dargis' paintings is the unique combination of mystery and gaiety of depth, delicacy and subtlety. One senses a delight on the part of the artist in his approach to any theme, and even the colors are dark blue and purple."

"The sun is always somewhere visible in a large yellow or red disk, in colored light that seems to be reflected from clear depths of water, or even in a dark pattern that suggests a midnight sun. One marvels at the subtlety with which he does this."

"His compositions catch the intangibles — prisms, wisps, clouds, growth, and space and space."

And Virginia Jeffrey Smith wrote: "First let us congratulate Mr. Dargis on his nomenclature. We find it hard to understand why abstract artists load their canvasses with titles which only start the onlooker into a quest to try to understand. A painting should stand for itself and need no footnotes. If you want to find meaning, go ahead and hunt for it but why not just enjoy it for its color and form and for the mood which it conveys to you?"

"In this room, you pass from one color harmony to another with enjoyment and without question."

"Dargis, we'd say, deals only in the dynamic force of color to express his surroundings, physical and spiritual. There are, however, touches of calligraphy that are part of the texture of painting. Texture, with this painter's work is an unobtrusive quality, wrought with painstaking delicacy."

The several critiques of Alfonsas Dargis' works do not fully take into account his creative depth, his diversification of form nor his varied array of colors. For this, it would take a study in depth.

In closing we would like to include some of Dargis' own words which may bring deeper insight into his works. "Before I begin to work I must eliminate and forget what my eyes see around me. In the painting I express what I see with my inner eye and what I feel. When this vision and power of perception grows weak I don't work any more. Repetition of previous forms warns of creative weariness."

Presently Alfonsas Dargis lives at 369 Barrington Street, Rochester, N. Y., where he also has a studio and is immersed in many new works.



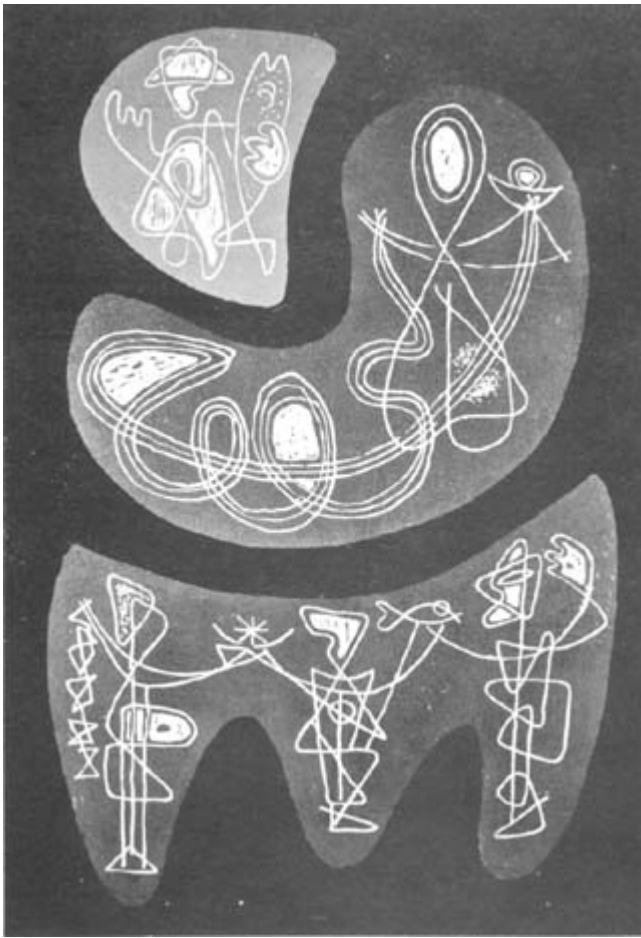
COMPOSITION OII



COMPOSITION (1970) India ink



CLOWN Woodcut



THREE ISLANDS (1960) Woodcut



GIRL WITH A FLOWER (1952) Woodcut



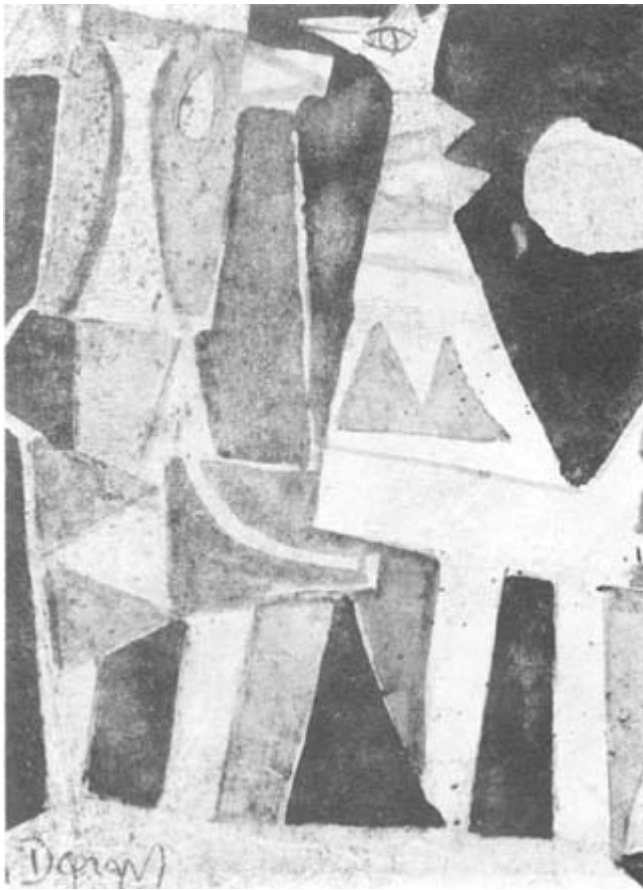
GIRL WITH A MASK Woodcut



COMPOSITION (1952) Woodcut



CIRCUS (1975) Oil



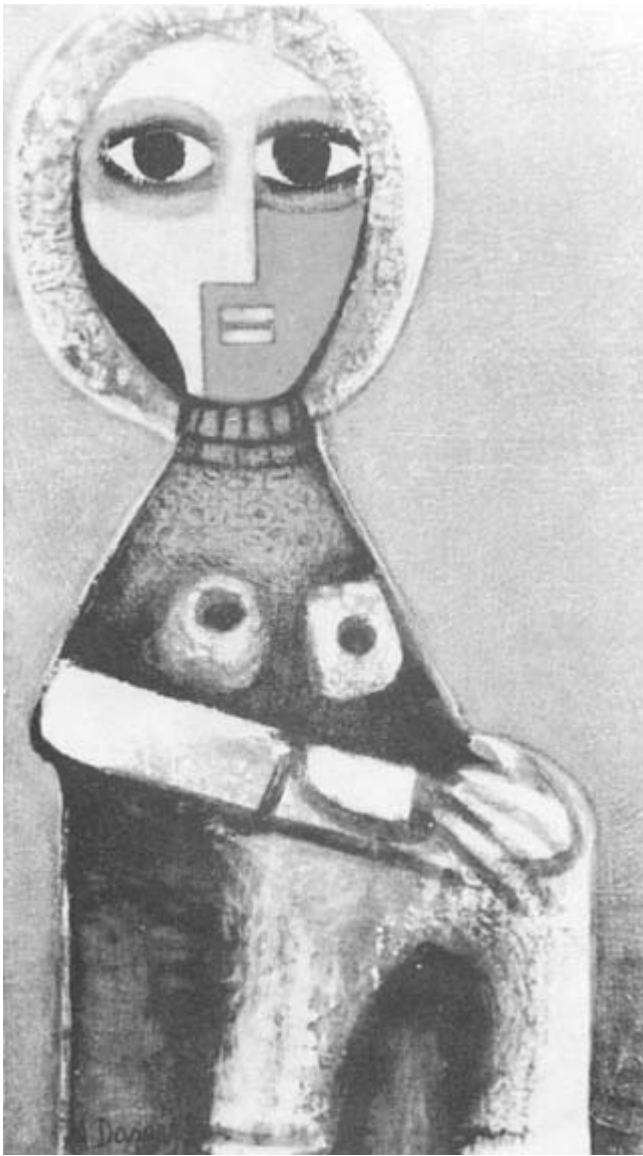
COMPOSITION (1971) Oil



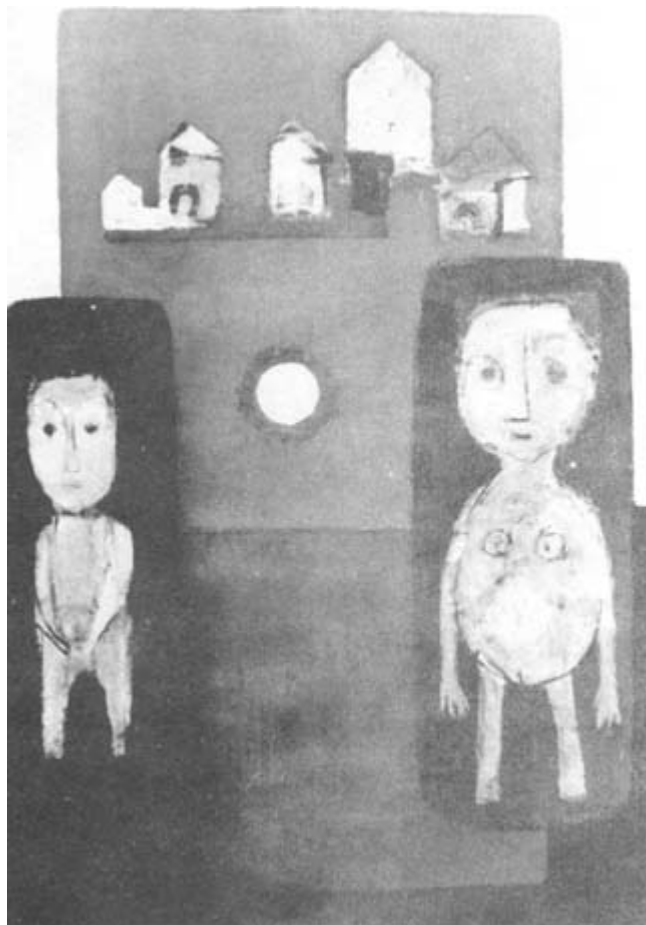
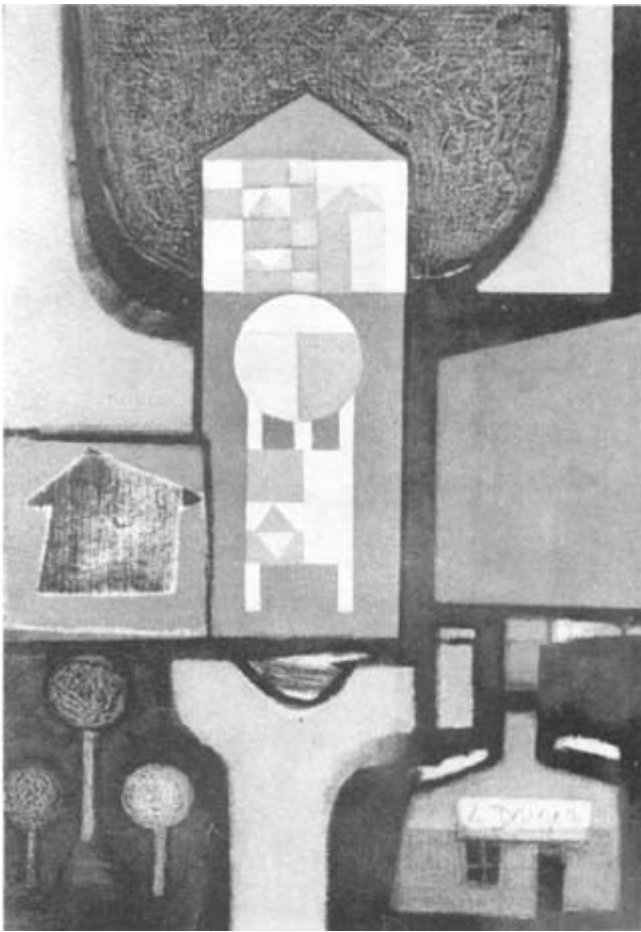
MOTHER (1974) Oil



HOMELESS (1974) Oil



COMPOSITION (1973) Oil



COMPOSITION (1972) Oil



NEWLYWEDS (1974) Oil

