

ARSHILE GORKY

the Man, the Time, the Ideas

by HAROLD
ROSENBERG

45 Illustrations
4 in full color

ARSHILE GORKY

by Harold Rosenberg

Harvard University Press

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The background of the book cover is a complex, abstract illustration in shades of grey, black, and white. It features a dense network of thin, dark lines that create a sense of movement and depth. There are several large, dark, irregular shapes that resemble organic forms or perhaps stylized figures. The overall effect is one of dynamic tension and intellectual complexity, characteristic of Gorky's Surrealist style.

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ARSHILE GORKY

David Rosenberg
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Writing with an intimate knowledge of Gorky both as person and as artist, and of the influence of his work today, Harold Rosenberg says: "By whatever measure one ranks the founders of contemporary abstract art, Arshile Gorky has a place on the top row."

In this model kind of study of an artist, the author of the renowned *The Tradition of the New* presents this pioneer of the new American painting in a masterly blending of biographical portrait and penetrating interpretation.

Harold Rosenberg's perspective is the struggle for identity by the young Armenian immigrant, as involved in the very process of choosing his name, his self-submission to a succession of masters (Cézanne, Picasso, Miró), his transforming friendships with other immigrant painters (de Kooning, Matta), until he arrives at the unique style and erotic imagery of his last period.

In tracing the lines of Gorky's development, Rosenberg discusses the social and political background of the painter's life and thought, from his embattled apprenticeship in Greenwich Village through his "sudden rise to fashionable Connecticut and the international art set, to his sad end in a suicide, motivated by illness, jealousy, and despair" in 1948.

It is Rosenberg's position that "Gorky stands for the importance of intellect in painting"—a figure counterposed to the popular image of the Abstract Expressionist as a whirling dervish of automatism and intoxication. This theme is illuminated by text and illustrations which relate the artist to the ideas of his time—ideas that figure importantly in the art of today.

An influence in America's art world since the thirties and a leading writer on the meaning of contemporary styles (he coined the term "Action Painting" used throughout the world), Rosenberg is known for his insight into the structure of the modern imagination and for his original formulations of the doings of the creative mind.

His study of the strange personality of Arshile Gorky and of his achievement is an indispensable document of modern painting and, in our opinion, one of the great essays in the literature of art.



Mayor LaGuardia, being handed the magazine *Art Front* which was published by the Left Wing Artists Union, with Gorky looking on. Sketch of Newark Airport Mural in background. c. 1937.

ARSHILE GORKY

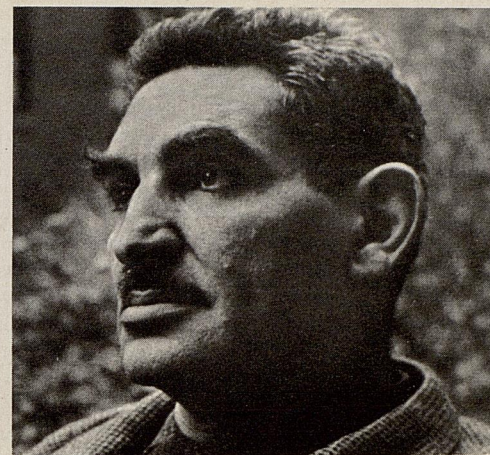
THE MAN, THE TIME, THE IDEA

HAROLD ROSENBERG

HORIZON PRESS INC NEW YORK

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credit: Maurice Berezov

Harold Rosenberg is the author of *The Tradition of the New* which since its publication two years ago by Horizon Press has gained a reputation as one of the most significant books of our times. Since his work first appeared in *transition, Poetry* (Chicago), the *Symposium* and *View* in the thirties, he has been a contributor to America's leading literary and art reviews, such as *Kenyon Review, Commentary, Hudson Review, The Nation, Partisan Review, Dissent, The Saturday Review, and Art News*. Abroad his work has appeared in *Twentieth Century, Encounter, and Les Temps Modernes*. And his articles have also been appearing in the *New York Times Book Review, Portfolio, and The London Magazine*.

At the invitation of the Maurice Merleau-Ponty, he supplied the chapter on Marx to the volume *Les Philosophes Célèbres*. Among his other works are a book of poems, *Trance Above the Streets* (1942), an introduction to Marcel Raymond's *From Baudelaire to Surrealism*, and the translation for *DeGaulle, Dictator*, by Henri de Kerillis (Harcourt Brace). *The Tradition of the New* has been published in Italy under the imprint of Feltrinelli, and in France by Editions de Minuit.

He was National Art Editor of the American Guide Series, a lecturer at the New School, and in Spring 1962 Regents Lecturer at the University of California. During World War II he served as Deputy Chief of the Domestic Radio Bureau, OWI, in charge of the New York office, and as Consulting Expert to the U.S. Treasury. He is employed as a consultant in public information and in the fine arts.