

all works by Arshile Gorky (1904–48) except No. 3, by Gorky and Hans Burkhardt (1904–94)

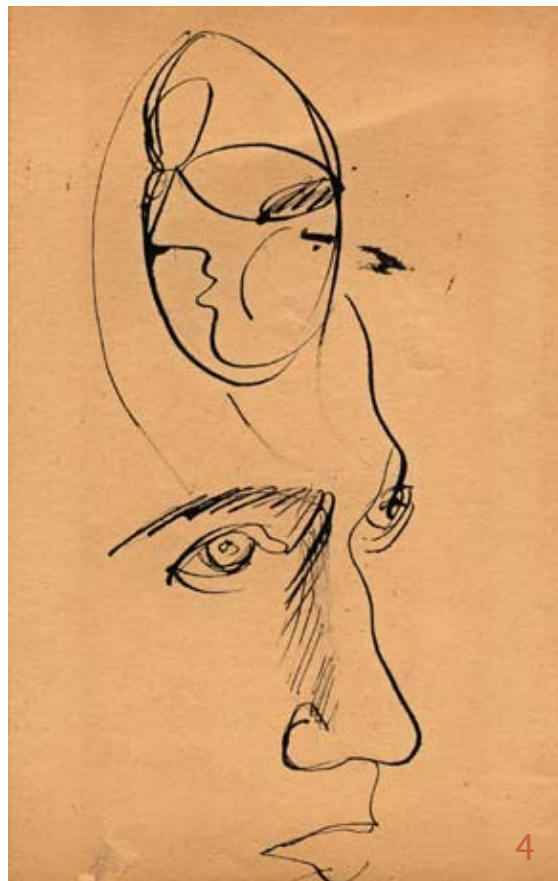
1. *Untitled*, c. 1935. Graphite on paper. 11¼ x 8 in.

2. *Staten Island*, 1927. Oil on canvas. 16 x 20 in.

3. *Abstraction (Conflicting Emotions)*, c. 1934. Ink and graphite on paper. 5 x 5⅞ in.

4. *Untitled*, c. 1934. Ink and graphite on paper. 5 x 5⅞ in.

Images courtesy Jack Rutberg Fine Arts, Los Angeles.



Saint Louis University's Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) presents a special exhibition of rare early works by Arshile Gorky, one of the preeminent artists of the twentieth century. *Gorky: The Early Years* includes 47 drawings and paintings from Gorky's formative years in New York, that reflect his study of Cézanne, Picasso, Braque, and Miró, and that show the emergence of his own distinct style that was to reach its maturity in the 1940s.

Arshile Gorky (1904–48) is widely regarded as one of the most pivotal and significant artists in the development of 20th-century American art. After moving to America from Armenia in 1920, he quickly became a lightning rod for other artists in the late 1920s and early 30s, sparking the genesis of what was to become the "New York School" and setting the course of modern art in America. *Gorky: The Early Years* offers new references and insights into this legendary artist during his seminal period as he explored the avant garde sensibilities of the time. Melvin P. Lader (regarded as the eminent scholar on the work of Arshile Gorky and author of numerous books on Gorky and Abstract Expressionism) notes in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, "Examples of his absorption of Analytic Cubism, Synthetic Cubism, and aspects of Surrealism are plentiful among these works ... " Similarly, Donald Kuspit wrote in his 1998 essay, "Arshile Gorky in the Thirties," that in works from this period "we see the beginning of this pure, autonomous, highly fluid, unpredictable line ... which begins in nature and ends in pure expression—as abstract expression."

That this exhibition was even possible is due to the long-standing friendship between Gorky and the Swiss-born American artist Hans Burkhardt (1904–94), who shared a studio with Gorky in New York for many years and acquired a formidable collection of Gorky's early works. Lader observes: "The Burkhardt collection Gorky drawings provides a rather unique opportunity... Drawings, by their very nature, register the artist's first impulses in creating a work. As such, they can often be of enormous value in understanding how an artist thinks and in tracing the various stages through which his art has progressed."

This exhibition is part of **MOCRA: Sources**, an occasional series of exhibitions presenting those seminal artists who have influenced the development of modern and contemporary art, and whose impact is seen in the artists of our time who engage the religious and spiritual dimensions in their work. *Gorky: The Early Years* presents an excellent opportunity for artists, art historians, and especially students, to study up close the formal and technical development of one of the last century's great artists.

About the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA)

Saint Louis University's Museum of Contemporary Religious Art (MOCRA) is the world's first museum of interfaith contemporary art. Officially opened in 1993, MOCRA is dedicated to the ongoing dialogue between contemporary artists and the world's faith traditions. Located in a spacious chapel that was used for over 35 years by Jesuits studying philosophy at Saint Louis University, MOCRA offers a unique, meditative setting for the display of its permanent collection and changing exhibitions. MOCRA's exhibitions demonstrate the range of contemporary religious and spiritual artistic expression, presenting the work of artists of regional, national and international stature.

Regular museum hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. MOCRA is located at 3700 West Pine Mall on the campus of Saint Louis University in midtown St. Louis. Free group tours are available, and MOCRA makes every effort to help educators and group organizers to incorporate its exhibitions into curricula and programming. Please call 314.977.7170 for directions, parking information and all other inquiries, or e-mail the museum at mocra@slu.edu, or visit <http://mocra.slu.edu>.