

## The Art of Samuel Bak

In his introduction to Lawrence L. Langer's *The Game Continues: Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak*, Bak reflects upon his family and his step-father, Markusha, in particular. A holocaust survivor, Markusha was a cultured man with considerable mathematical talent. To young Bak's amazement, Markusha didn't need a physical board or chessmen: his disciplined mind alone was all he needed to play a private game of chess. Perhaps the mathematical orderliness of chess balanced the disorder in Markusha's life—the loss of two children and his first wife, the terror of the camps, the turmoil of the post-war period. But even this intellectual comfort would fade with advancing years as he lost touch with reality and drifted ever more deeply into the fog that today we might diagnose as Alzheimer's. Bak declares, "It was Markusha's drifting away that led me to the 'Chess-land' paintings."

In the works presented here, we explore the aftermath of a brave life that withstood for as long as could be expected the cataclysm of public and private assault. We can see evidence of the orderly lines of the chessboard, of the weighty precision of the chess pieces, and of awful destruction.

—William Newmiller

**Mr. Bak is represented by Pucker Gallery**  
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*Horsepower*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 26¼ x 26”

*Second Revolution in the Middle Game*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 34 x 50”





*Auxillary Help*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 18 x 15"

*The Ghetto of Jewish History*, 1976 Oil on Linen 52 x 48"





*Study for Greatness*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 18 x 15"

*Distant Fire*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 22¼ x 26"





*In the Mountains of Troy*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 18 x 22 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

*Targeted*, 1998 Oil on Canvas 18 x 14"





*The Leaders*, 1991 Oil on Canvas 32 x 39"

*After the Fall*, 1991 Oil on Canvas 26 x 32"

