

WORKS FROM THE 1980s

IRVING MARCUS

September 8 – October 19, 2019

Parker Gallery is proud to present our first solo exhibition with Sacramento-based artist Irving Marcus. The exhibition includes large-scale paintings from the early 1980s, together with graphite and oil pastel drawings. This body of work represents a crucial development in Marcus's practice. In these works, the artist combined photographs from multiple newspapers to create a composite image, oftentimes flipping the images upside down to construct vertiginous and enigmatic compositions.

After working in an Abstract Expressionist style through the 1950s, Marcus soon turned toward his immediate surroundings for inspiration, looking outward rather than within. Domestic interiors and figurative scenes in exuberant hues dominate his work from the 1960s. One day, his wife Liz pointed to a photograph in the newspaper of a dog sledding. He suddenly became acutely aware of the incongruity of this image in proximity to photographs of war and natural disasters. Marcus cultivated an idiosyncratic social commentary by focusing attention on these improbable images.

Through a fastidious process of translation, Marcus developed a distinctive means of transforming found images. From a grainy, black and white newspaper photograph, Marcus would map out the composition in graphite, using erasures to remove information and exaggerate tonal contrasts. Separately, he explored formal color relationships in oil pastel, establishing a palette of extravagantly discordant hues, exploding the tonal range into contrasting temperature-based relationships. Marcus would then create a rigorous translation of the graphite drawing into a full-color oil pastel drawing. If the composition warranted extended exploration, a large-scale work on canvas would follow, of which the artist has produced fewer than seventy-five over a career spanning six decades.

Marcus further complicated his technique by manipulating the orientation of his source imagery and combining multiple images together into a cryptic and disorienting composition. Pictorial space is disrupted through the use of color to describe emotion and mood, rather than volume or depth of field. In *Sharply Divided Crowd* (1985), Marcus uses blood red to articulate the space surrounding the protesting figures, effecting ominous forboding and transforming negative spaces into ghost-like effegies. The works on view in this exhibition relish in rewarding the patient viewer a bounty of slow, surprising discoveries.

Irving Marcus (b. 1929, Minneapolis, MN lives and works in Sacramento, CA) Selected solo exhibitions include *Irving Marcus: Romance & Disaster*, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA (2018; catalogue), B. Sakato Garo, Sacramento, CA (2013), Solomon Dubnick Gallery, Sacramento, CA (2003, 2000), Joseph Chowning Gallery, San Francisco, CA (1985-2001), Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA (1988, 1978, 1974), Candy Store Gallery, Folsom, CA (1964-1972). Selected group exhibitions include, *The Candy Store*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018), *Kindler, Gentler Nation*, Karma, New York, NY (2018), *A Horse is a Horse*, Solomon Dubnick Gallery, Sacramento, CA (2002), *Seven Artists in California*, Gallery Takano, Tokyo, Japan (1985), *Welcome to the Candy Store*, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA (1981), *Delta*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA (1973), and *Six Northern California Artists*, Belmonte Gallery, Oak Park, CA (1962). His work is held in many permanent collections, including the Crocker Art Museum, de Young Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis, Oakland Museum of California Art, San Jose Museum of Art and Yale University Art Gallery.