

the art of

elias friedensohn

articles & reviews

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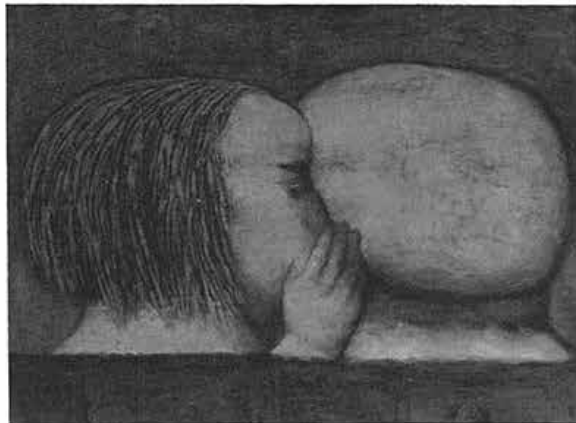
**YOUNG
AMERICA
1957**

Elias Friedensohn

Born December 12, 1924, New York City. Studied Tyler School of Fine Arts, Temple University, Philadelphia, 1942. Three years in military service, one spent in Paris working informally with Gabriel Zendel. Studied painting Queens College (B.A., 1948) and history of art at Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1949–51. One-man exhibitions: Roko Gallery, 1952; Edwin Hewitt Gallery, 1956. Has taught painting, art history, metal and jewelry work at Queens College School of General Studies, Crafts Students League, Tobé-Coburn School.

Friedensohn's early work, before 1952, was strongly marked, he writes, by his interest in German expressionism. There followed a search for increased monumentality, which turned him towards the great figure traditions of the past.

"For some while I had been deeply interested in the problem of communication — with all its attendant difficulties in our times. That area became, in symbolic terms, a dominant theme in my work. I wanted to convey the symbolic and emotional weight entirely through the use of the human figure. I wished also to establish a kind of mythology... a vision of ancestors based on a kind of psychological and emotional history. For this, Biblical and mythological themes provided important material. I have been attempting to examine these themes closely and at many





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levels—from the tragic to the satirical. I have tried to present the façades behind which the real meaning and living innards lie. The particular horror of façades behind which only emptiness is to be found. To present the façades as closed and dead. . . or sometimes pierced to reveal fleetingly a glimpse and hint of the life and power within. The consequent ambiguity of communications—real and meaningless, façades and innards.

“In this direction I have hoped to infuse into painting a valid figurative symbolism based on emotional and psychological truths which will speak directly to the emotions and experiences.”

- 24 **The Communicant.** 1955. Oil. 33×19. *Lent by the Edwin Hewitt Gallery.*
- 25 **Secret.** 1955. Oil. 18 ¼×24. *Lent by the Edwin Hewitt Gallery.*
- 26 **Effort at Speech between Two People.** 1956. Oil. 28×36. *Lent by the Edwin Hewitt Gallery.*
- 27 **Jeune Fille en Fleur.** 1956. Oil. 36×30. *Lent by the Edwin Hewitt Gallery.*
- 28 **Palimpsest.** 1956. Oil. 17 ¾×23. *Lent by the Edwin Hewitt Gallery.*