

An abstract collage on a white background featuring various geometric shapes and colors. The colors used are red, blue, black, and white. The shapes include triangles, rectangles, and irregular polygons, some of which are layered or overlapping. A prominent feature is a long, thin, black, slightly curved shape that extends from the center towards the right. There are also several smaller, more complex shapes, some with internal patterns or textures. The overall composition is dynamic and non-representational.

Addison Rowe Gallery

Beatrice Mandelman & Louis Ribak

Addison Rowe Gallery

229 East Marcy Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501

Beatrice Mandelman



Untitled. 60-SP 1-13. 5 7/8" x 19 7/8". Mixed media on board

Beatrice (Ribak) Mandelman (1912 – 1998) was born December 31st in Newark, New Jersey. From an early age, she showed an interest in the arts, in part due to her family’s close relationship with Louis Lozowick. Lozowick spent many years traveling Europe, studying and exhibiting with the Russian Constructivists, Dutch De Stijl painters, and German Bauhaus artists. This wealth of knowledge was not lost on young Bea—in her later years, she recalled the enduring impression left on her by Constructivist Kazimir Malevich’s posters. Through her family’s friendship with Lozowick, she developed a precocious interest in Modern art.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Bea became friends with William de Kooning and joined his circle of intimates. Often she would sneak away from school to visit de Kooning’s home. It was during this time that she was first introduced to Arshile Gorky and many other Abstract Expressionist painters. In 1935, she joined the WPA, working for the Silk Screen Unit. It was also in the 1930s that she met her future husband, Louis Ribak, at a dance sponsored by the Artists Union.

Louis Ribak (1902 – 1979) was born in Russian Poland and immigrated to the United States in 1911. He took classes with John Sloan at the Art Students League in New York City, and by the 1920s was one of the foremost figure painters in America. He spent much of his spare time visiting Alfred Stieglitz’s Gallery 291 and was later recommended for a Guggenheim Fellowship by Georgia O’Keeffe. He first exhibited with the American Group in 1932—this included Stuart Davis, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, José Clemente Oroscó, Reginald Marsh, and Maurice Sterne. In 1934, the Whitney acquired Ribak’s *Self-Portrait*, which was exhibited at the Venice Biennale that year.

Louis was drafted into the army in 1942, and he and Bea decided to marry prior to his deployment. During his training and the years that followed, Louis suffered from many health issues. He was discharged from service in 1944 and was strongly advised to move to a dry climate for his asthma. Soon thereafter, John Sloan invited them to New Mexico. They arrived with the intention of painting for a year, but stayed for a lifetime. Bea was acutely aware of the risk they were taking in leaving New York—her friend Louise Nevelson warned her that no artist could afford to leave Manhattan, not even for a day. However, the attitudes surrounding the New York art scene had become intolerable to the couple. Louis, whose work was figurative, was closely associated with Arshile Gorky, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, and was a close friend of Stuart Davis.



Blue Time, c.1970-73

70-BT03

Oil on canvas

37 ¼" x 31 ½"

Signed: upper right

He was torn between his affiliations with figurative work and the growing importance of abstract art. Both Louis and Bea were exhausted by the divide between realists and abstractionists. Bea describes their rationale for leaving as follows:

Louis did not want to get involved in art politics. He wanted to be able to stay in his studio and fight his own battles there. Each group wanted Louis on their side. He did not want to take sides at that time. He didn't want to be in the middle of the politics of the emerging Abstract Expressionists and declining Social Realists. He wanted to follow his own road. He's the only one of his particular group who left the fold and came to Taos, going on a unique tangent. He had the courage to leave. (Hobbs 27)

Bea and Louis were intrigued by the sublime southwestern landscape and the vitality of the artistic community in Taos. The community consisted of several generations of artists, including the founders of the Taos School, the Synchronist/Cubist Andrew Dasburg, and the Transcendental painter Emil Bisttram. The Taos art scene was small and intensely divided along similar lines as New York. However unlike New York, the Ribaks could maintain friendships with people in both the abstract and realist camps. Bea later recounted:

It was a world of the artist. The artist counted in this town. We all used to meet every Sunday afternoon in the La Fonda Hotel and play chess. We were friends with Dasburg and Gaspard, though they didn't like each other.... people like Blumenschein, Lockwood, and Berninghaus liked Louis personally and came to him for advice and critiques—as an unbiased, outside sort of artist. (Hobbs 28)

The Ribaks also developed a close friendship with Taos patron Mabel Dodge Luhan, who was described as a generous friend and supporter. She even went so far as to loan them Marsden Hartley's Portrait of Berlin as inspiration.

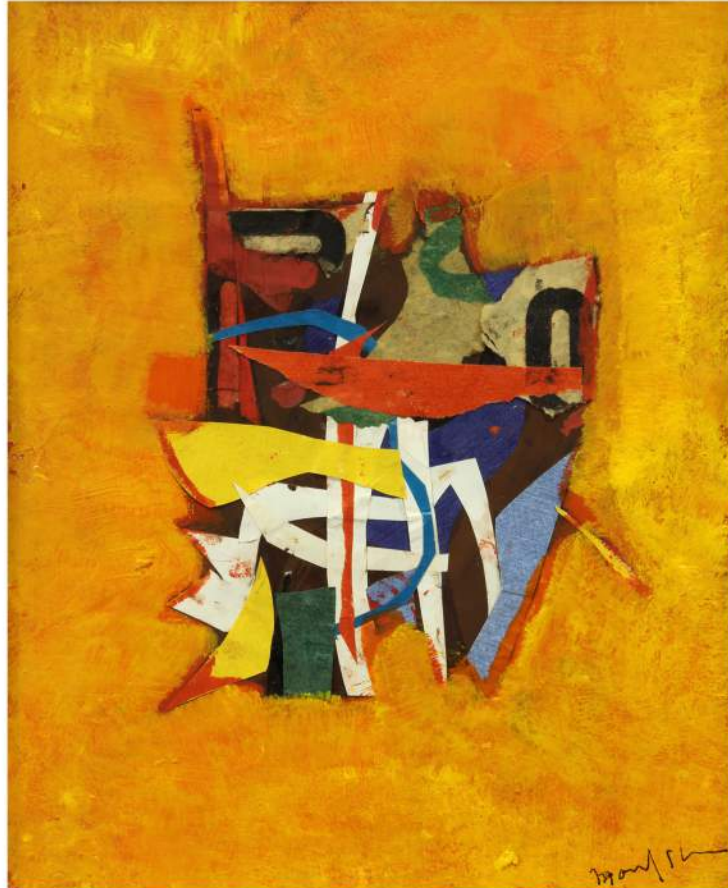
In 1947, the Ribaks founded the Taos Valley Art School. Its doors remained open for six years. During this time, it attracted a variety of artists taking advantage of the GI Bill. These included Ed Corbett, who enrolled in the school even though he had taught at the California School of Fine Arts and had worked with Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still. He became an important source of Abstract Expressionist ideas in Taos. Oli Sihvonen attended the Ribak's school after studying at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina with Josef Albers. This unique convergence of artists made the Taos Valley Art School a forum for ideas from both coasts (continued on page 24).



Untitled. 60-SP 4-05. 9 5/8'' x 11 3/4''. Mixed media on paper. Signed: lower right



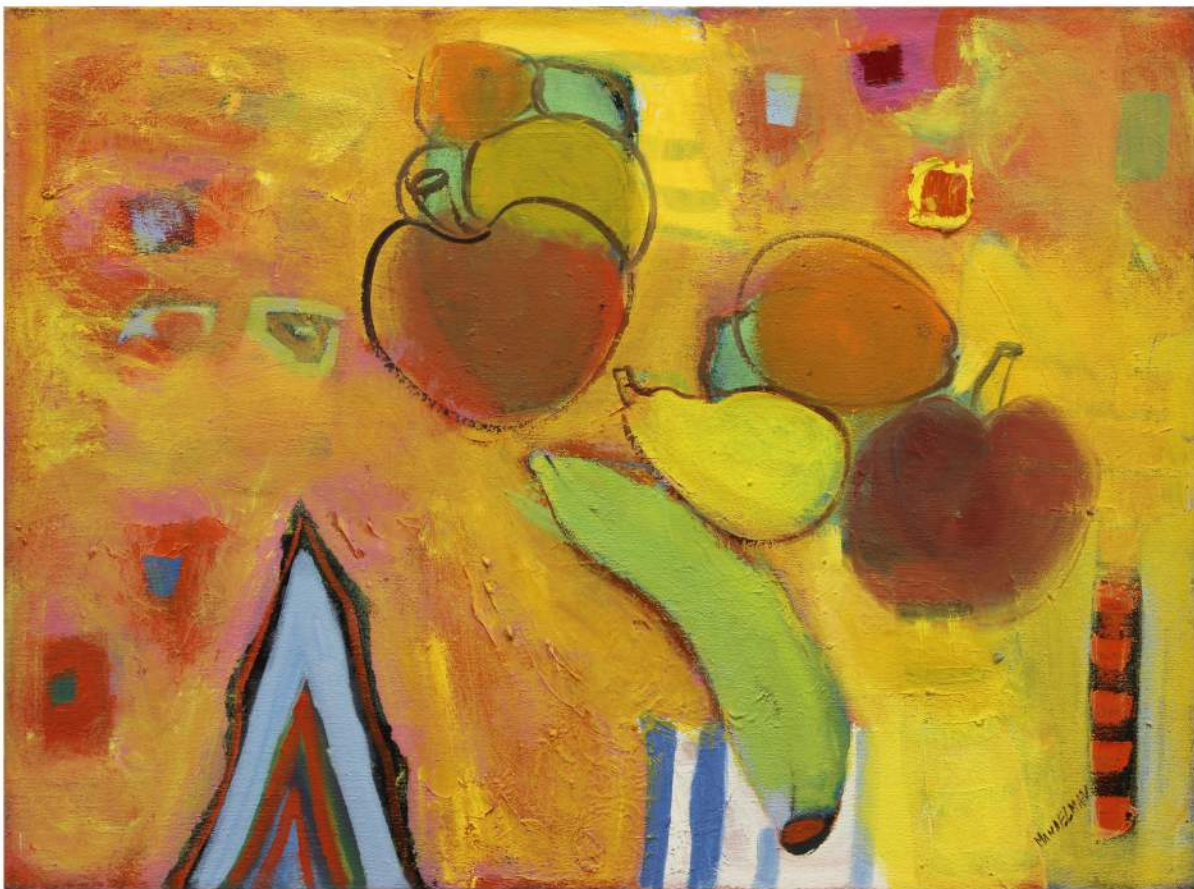
Homage to Homer, c.1965
60-PR12
Acrylic with mixed media
collage on Masonite
48" x 35 1/2"
Signed: lower right



7 *Book of Kells – Happiness series No. 8 ½. 70-COL01. 11 ¾” x 9”.* Mixed media on paper. Signed: lower right

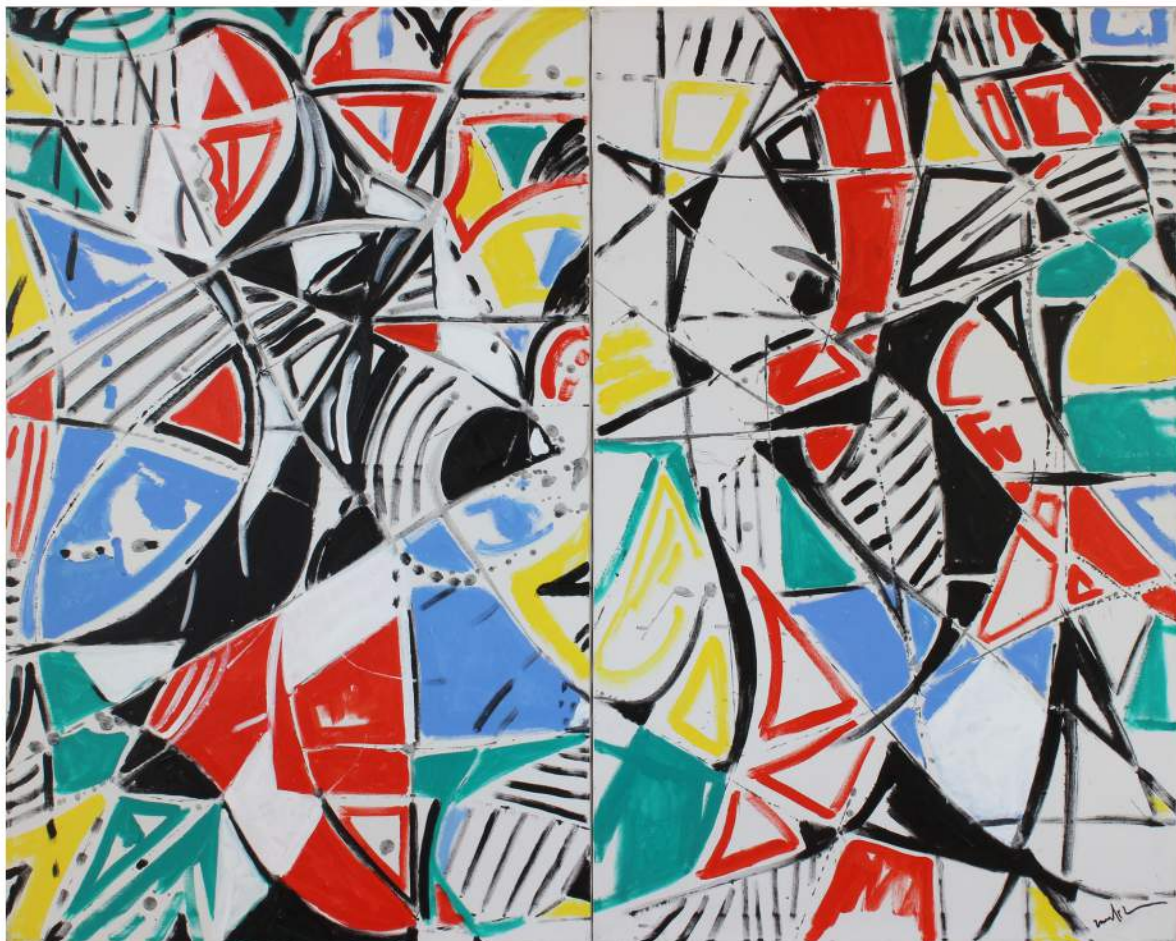


Sun Series #16
B-14, c.1970
70-SUN08
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 36"
Signed: upper right 8





Arrangement #1
60-COL06
19 3/4" x 15 3/4"
Mixed media on paper
Signed: lower right





Sun Series B-11, c.1970. 70-SUN07. Acrylic on canvas 34" x 40". Signed: upper right



Ink Night No. 3
60-IN03

25 3/4" x 19 3/4"

Mixed media on paper
mounted on board

Signed: lower right



Carnival, c. 1990
90-AC 1-08
20" x 15 1/2"
Mixed media on paper
Signed: lower right



Rift No. 9, c.1986
80-R14
Acrylic on canvas
28" x 22"
Signed: lower right



Happiness Series No.15,
c.1974
70-HAP03
Acrylic on canvas
31 1/2" x 23 5/8"
Signed: lower right



Words & Form, c.1960s

60-COL48

Acrylic and mixed media

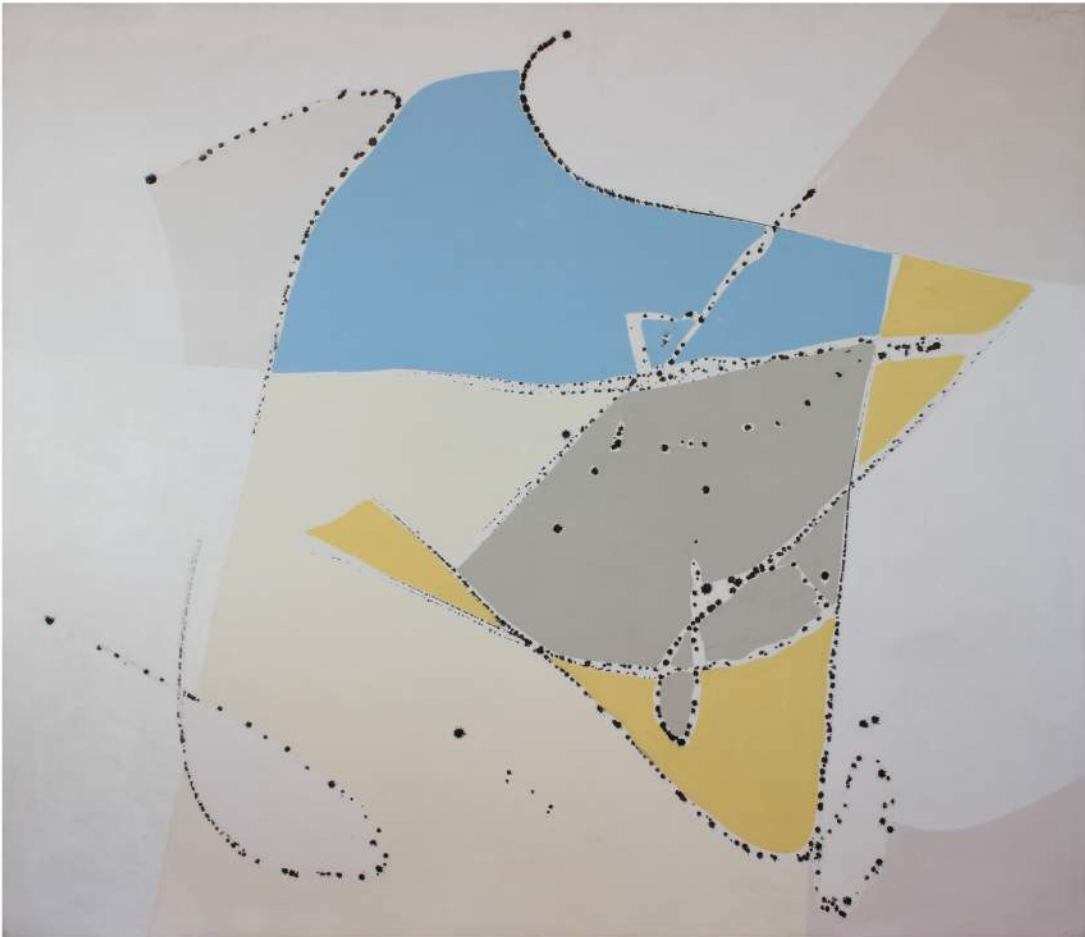
on canvas with collage

30" x 40"

Signed: upper right



Brazil #12, 1989
80-B06
Acrylic on canvas
48" x 36"
Signed: bottom center





Untitled
90-COL 1-21
19 3/4" x 15 1/2"
Mixed media on paper
Signed: lower right





White No. 1
60-PR15
11" x 9"
Mixed media on paper
Signed: top left



In 1948, Bea traveled to Paris to study painting with Ferdinand Léger at his academy on the Boulevard de Clichy. Here she was pushed to develop a unique form of abstraction based on Léger's purist work but imbued with her Taos influences. Léger may well have given her advice similar to what he told George L. K. Morris in 1929: "make it tight, make it dry," and work all over the canvas. During this time, she also developed a close friendship with Francis Picabia, whose Cubist works were attracting much attention.

These experiences formed the foundation of the art of Beatrice Mandelman. Upon returning to Taos from France, she began experimenting with a variety of different styles. Foremost among these are her experiments in white, which were utilized in the *Time*, *Sun*, and *Rift* Series (pages 3, 8, 12, & 15). She continued to travel the world and was influenced by each place she went. This is apparent in her *Carnival* and *Brazil* paintings (pages 11, 14, & 18). Bea and Louis became the foundation for the next generation of artists who came to Taos. Their names are included in the long list of painters that shaped Taos and the art of New Mexico.

Sources

Hobbs, Robert Carleton. *Beatrice Mandelman, Taos Modernist*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1995. Print.

"Bea Mandelman Biography." Mandelman-Ribak Collection. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Feb. 2015.

"Louis Ribak Biography." Mandelman-Ribak Collection. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Feb. 2015.

Louis Ribak



Study for Westgate

RIB027

Oil on canvas

47" x 31"

Signed: upper right



Aegean Series #29, c.1950s-60s. RIB267. Acrylic on canvas. 49" x 60". Signed: lower right





Untitled (Red with Black)

RIB285

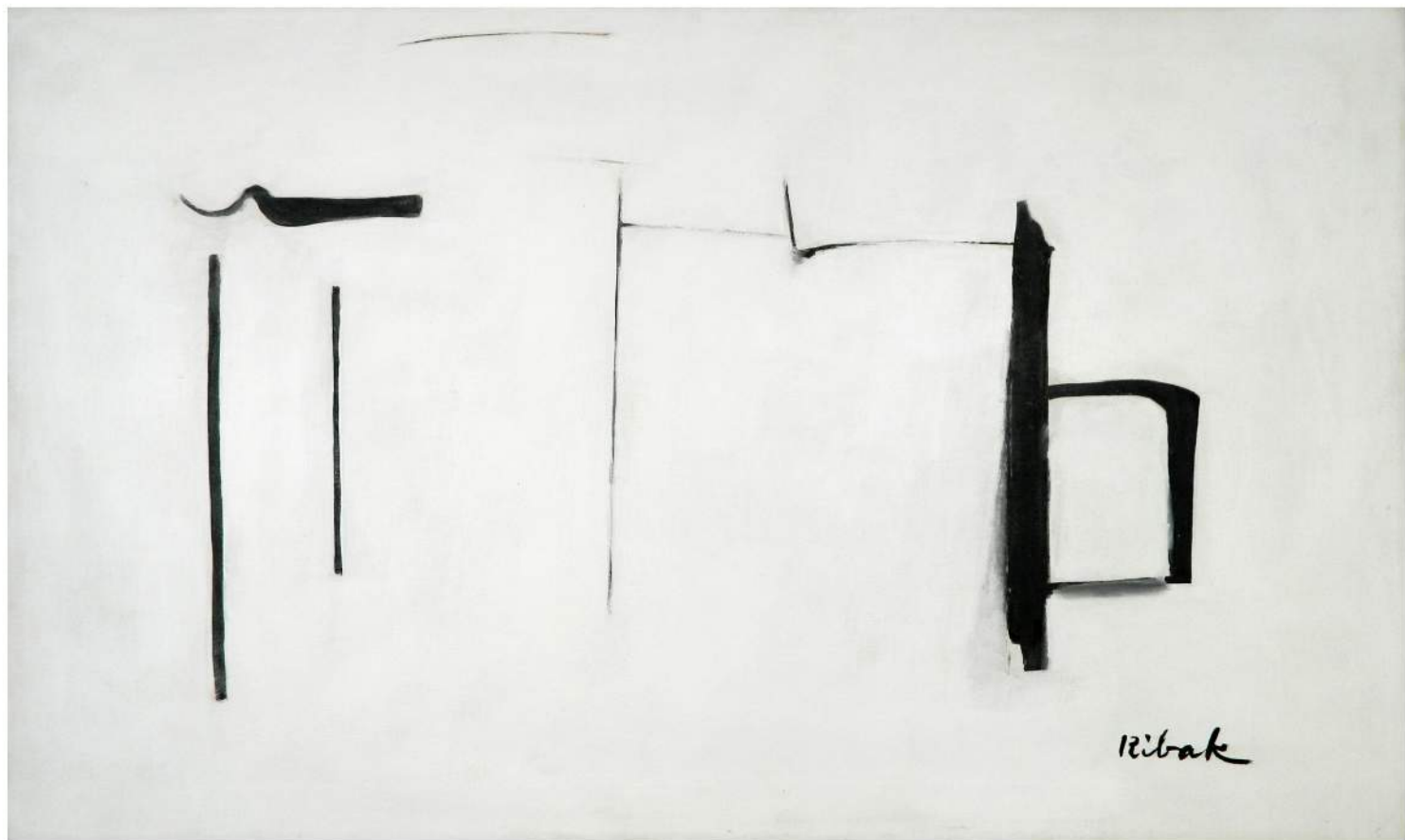
Acrylic on canvas

60" x 47"

Signed: lower right



Canyon Series #17. Acrylic on canvas. 23 ¾" x 35 ½". Signed: lower right



Winter Structure. Oil on canvas. 23 ½" x 39 ½". Signed: lower right

I recently had the wonderful experience of rummaging through the racks at the UNM Foundation where the Ribak-Mandelman Estate is stored. I was surprised by the large body of works lacking color, as I had only seen works of the Carnival and Brazil series. This gave me a new perspective on her art—I saw her development as an artist and found distinct style changes throughout her career. The experience deepened my understanding of how exciting these artists were. This catalog is a collection of exceptional works by Louis Ribak and Beatrice Mandelman.

Enjoy,
Victoria Addison

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