



У. СНАГІ





# Y. CHANÉ

NEW PAINTINGS

**ODON  
WAGNER**  
CONTEMPORARY

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## PERCEPTUAL STRATEGIES: NEW WORKS FROM YEHOUDA CHAKI

*We are the bees of the invisible world. We perpetually gather the honey of the visible world in order to store it in the great golden hive of the invisible one."*

Rainer Maria Rilke

Originally studying art in Tel Aviv, Israel and then in Paris, France, before settling in Montreal, Canada, Yehouda Chaki has absorbed the light and energy of many locales around the world in his lengthy career as an observer of nature and its sensual machinery. If you're fortunate enough to be encountering his intense landscapes and still lifes for the first time, you're in for a tasteful treat. Indeed, even better, this time there are also edgy portrait studies to engage the intrepid visitor: portraits that are saturated with the soul of their subject and not merely a facial representation, portraits that more often feel like microscopic mountains. The fact that he so expertly shifts his sensitive gaze from the formats of portrait (close up to) then to still life (nearby to) and then also to landscape (far away from) is for me one of the key hallmarks of his dazzling, magisterial work.

Each viewing perspective is part of an overall perceptual strategy that charms the eye and warms the heart. He seems to have been especially touched by the unique vibrations of Greece, a geo-spiritual zone to which he often returns in his work via the deep and lusty tones he employs so deftly. Three of his most intimate works reference the Greek environment: two are each simply titled "Greece" and one is titled "Thessalonika", referring to the largest city in Greece and capital of Macedonia. This physical space is rich in the history of our western civilization in general and Byzantine monuments in particular, and these three small evocations pack an intense wallop that far outruns their deceptive diminutive size. They themselves are, in fact, small monuments to a grandeur so splendid that it doesn't require grandiosity to make their optical messages felt.

A riot of colour. That phrase came immediately to my lips when I began to pictorially converse with such exuberantly constructed images as these new paintings emerging from the skillful brush of Chaki. They throw a wild party for your retina, and that to me is the best way to describe their emotive impact. The rest of your body, your mind, and even your spirit: they are also all invited to the raucous party taking place on the surface of your dancing eyes. Once again, this painter is capable of mastering

a shift in scale just as easily as a shift in perspective: the human and larger than human scales of his bigger landscapes permit him an even more operatic stage upon which to unleash the emotional calculus of his images. His largest landscapes are almost ten feet, his smallest, ten inches.

"Orange Mountain Meets Blue Mountain", "Blue River", "Colours of Spring", "White River" and "Dancing Trees" for instance, each embrace the viewer in a larger than life drama of form and tone, line and shape, horizon and sky. In these lively romps through an expressionistic natural domain, just as in "Dark Blue River" and "Evening on the Toba River", our attention to watery detail is submerged in a spectacularly melting display of pigmented fireworks designed to engulf, to envelope, and to entertain the senses. Similar in scope, "Climbing the Green Mountain", with its far distant peak and invisible climbers, and the trio of "From Sydney's Window" paintings, with their single isolated tree presented from different vantage points almost rendering them as every tree, also engage us at a visceral level. They feel like symbolic, metaphorical or poetic arboreal abstractions, nearly the existential trees one might encounter on a Beckett stage set, and they too operate at the level of the pre-frontal cortex, the same place great music touches us. Music for the eyes.

If you're fortunate enough, like me, to be returning to his enraptured and almost psychedelic vistas after an earlier vacation into such muscular panoramas, then you're in for a different and even more rewarding sort of treat. It can be reassuring to observe a mature artist over time, to visit and revisit their image library and find in them a dependable and consummate craftsmanship that doesn't jump around nervously from one painting trend to another. One of the pleasures of returning to write again about an artist one admires is that of detecting a deep continuity in their commitment to a personal visual language. You can always depend on his ability to surprise you again and again. Perhaps that is because his images, especially his larger landscapes, hold true to a poetic insight that Proust once made: the true voyage of discovery lies not in seeking new landscapes but rather in having new eyes.

"Tree with a Yellow Sky" is especially Beckett-esque or Artaud-like in this theatrical stage set respect, with its jagged singularity and its seeming reference to the universal world-tree motif known as yggdrasil, the immense mythical tree that binds the nine worlds together in the mythologies of multiple cultures. This stage set motif however can also shift to the smaller zone of a still life format with equal ease, "Flowers on the Blue" and "Window" being excellent examples of this artist's flexible adaptability. That shape shifting skill in subject is evident as well as in the sequence of works that also shift their format medium from canvas to wood: the two "October Days" pieces, both of them sharing an overlapping identity, and "Blue Sky", with its strikingly forceful simplicity, appear before us in a kind of fire alarm for the eyes. No emergency however, just raw emergence.

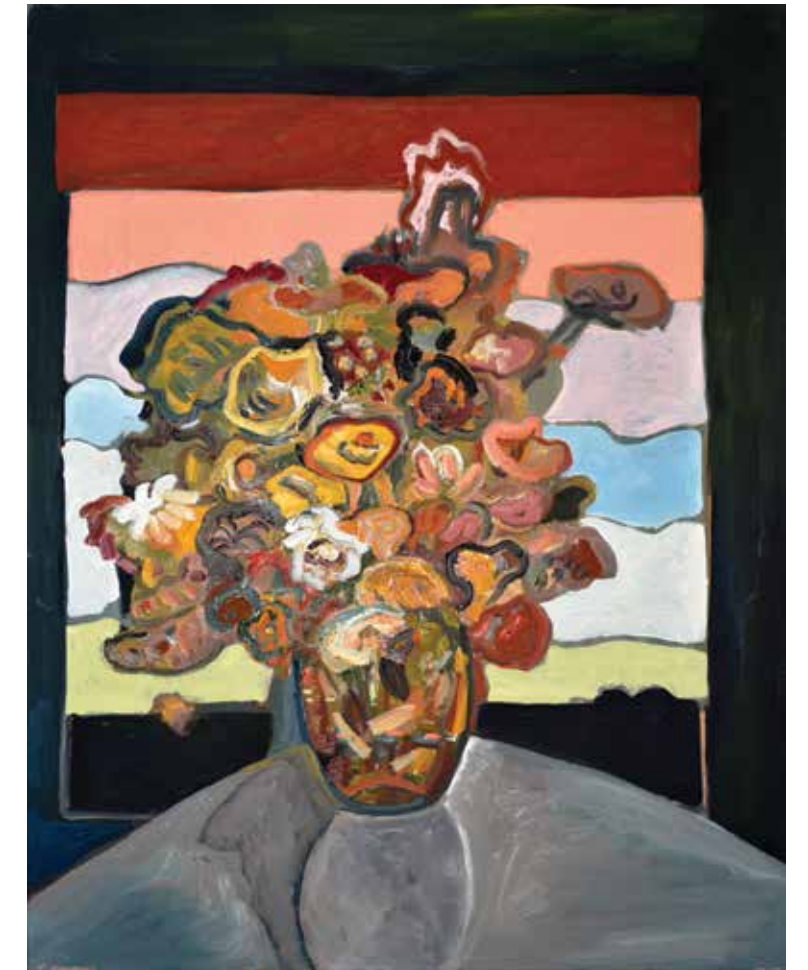
Along with the small self-portraits, each of which is a study presumably for a future larger work but is quite capable of holding its own at a ten inch scale, two other pieces rendered on wood also strike me as being stupendous in their pictorial stature while appearing humble in their size. "Woman with a Yellow Dress" and "Les Alpes" are both knockouts. How "Les Alpes" manages to convey the soaring sky-like immensity of a range of mountains winding its way through several European nations is simply a secret that perhaps belongs to Chaki alone. For me, it doesn't represent, depict or portray rock, it is rock. The same could be said of the "Woman" piece: it doesn't attempt to achieve the impossible, that of portraying the feminine, it somehow conveys the essence of being female, in form and formlessness at the same time.

True visual professionals, those who follow a vocation rather than a mere profession, remain committed to the point of fixation on a certain perceptual strategy: theirs is a recognizable realm to which we travel willingly in order to submit to a certifiable and reliable aesthetic experience. Not for them the sudden shifts in stylistic trends or media narratives which feed the restless experimentation of younger artists with less personal history. A seasoned painter such as Chaki is restless in a different way, the way flowers, trees, rivers and mountains are restless, the way a perpetually changing sky is restless.

Leonard Cohen once suggested that every artist—be it a painter, composer, writer or filmmaker—has one song he writes over and over again; one picture he paints again and again. The beautiful

thing about this endeavour is that you don't realize you're doing the same thing, but in fact, "it keeps returning to you wearing the original blue gown..." In the same mysterious way, Yehouda Chaki keeps returning to us wearing the same original visions, yet each time infused with a fresh new energy, with fresh honey from the invisible world.

By Donald Brackett







2 BLUE RIVER 1424 oil on canvas, 80 x 120 in.



3 1545 oil on canvas, 80 x 120 in.





4 DANCING TREES 1727 oil on canvas, 50 x 80 in.



5 COLOURS OF SPRING 1370 oil on canvas, 82 x 103 in.









7 THE WHITE RIVER oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in.

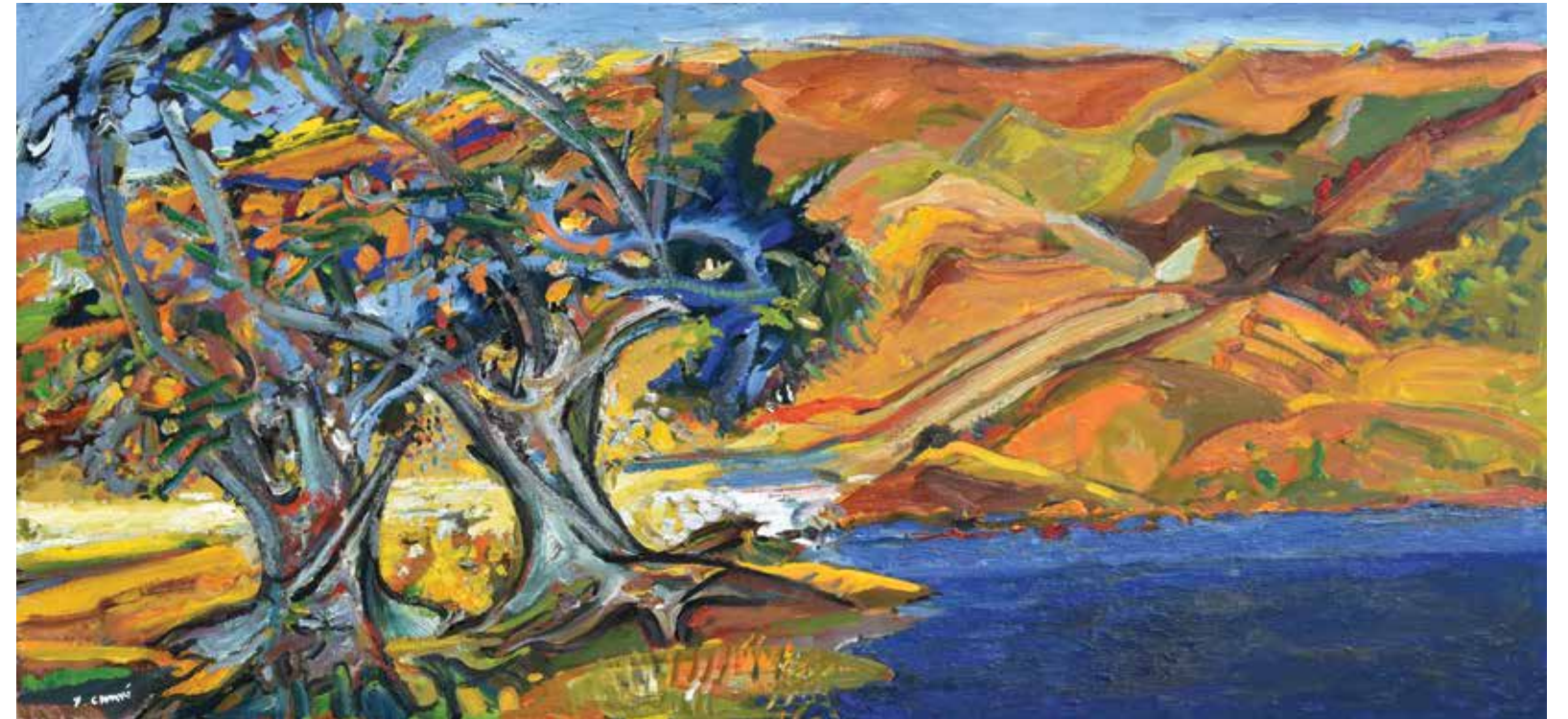


8 RIVER THROUGH A TOWN oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in.





9 DARK BLUE RIVER 1708 oil on canvas, 40 x 60 in.



10 EVENING ON THE TOBA RIVER 1730 oil on canvas, 28 x 60 in.





11 WINDOW 1631 oil on canvas, 38 x 30 in.



12 FROM SYDNEY'S WINDOW 1644 oil on canvas, 30 x 38 in.





13 CLIMBING THE GREEN MOUNTAIN 1709 oil on canvas, 30 x 38 in.



14 FLOWERS ON THE BLUE 1710 oil on canvas, 30 x 38 in.





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15 SELF PORTRAIT STUDY 1722-w oil on wood, 16 x 13 in.  
16 A KISS 1317-w oil on wood, 10 x 10 in.

17 GOING TO THE MOVIES 1732-w oil on wood, 14 x 12 in.  
18 WOMAN WITH A YELLOW DRESS 1327-w oil on wood, 10 x 8 in.

19 LES ALPES 1733-w oil on wood, 10 x 8 in.  
20 A TREE WITH A YELLOW SKY 1734-w oil on wood, 10 x 8 in.

21 GREECE 1071-w oil on wood, 10 x 8 in.  
22 OCTOBER DAYS 1186-w oil on wood, 10 x 8 in.



YEHOUDA CHAKI

EDUCATION

1952-56	Studied under Prof. Joseph Schwartzman, Tel Aviv, Israel
1958-60	Avni Academy, Tel Aviv, Israel, under Stematsky, Mokadi, Streichman
1960-63	École des Beaux Arts, Paris, France under Prof. Bercier

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017	Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario
2016	Galerie St. Laurent + Hill, Ottawa, Ontario Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec
2015	Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario
2014	Galerie St-Laurent + Hill, Ottawa, Ontario Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec
2012	Gallery DeNovo, Sun Valley, Idaho Gallery Jones, Vancouver, British Columbia Newzones Gallery, Calgary, Alberta Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec
2011	Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario Galerie St. Laurent + Hill, Ottawa, Ontario
2010	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia JMSB Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec
2009	Gallery De Novo, Sun Valley, Idaho Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario
2008	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery Vancouver, British Columbia
2007	Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec Galerie St-Laurent + Hill, Ottawa, Ontario
2006	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery Vancouver, British Columbia Odon Wagner Contemporary, Toronto, Ontario
2005	McIntosh Gallery London, Ontario Buschlen Mowatt Gallery Vancouver, British Columbia UNB Art Center Fredericton, New Brunswick
2004	Galerie de Bellefeuille, Montreal, Quebec Galerie St-Laurent + Hill, Ottawa, Ontario
2002	Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2001	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia Hart House Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2000	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario
1999	Waddington & Gorce, Montreal, Quebec
1998	Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Ontario Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1997	Virginia Christopher Gallery, Calgary, Alberta Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1996	Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1995	Waddington & Gorce, Montreal. Quebec Virginia Christopher Gallery, Calgary, Alberta Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1994	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1993	Odon Wagner Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia

1992	Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario Waddington & Gorce, Montreal, Quebec
1991	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1990	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario Galerie Madeleine Lacerte, Quebec City, Quebec Galerie Barbara Silverberg, (ceramics), Montreal, Quebec
1989	Buschlen Mowatt Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia
1988	Galerie Daniel, Montreal, Quebec Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1987	Galerie Madeleine Lacerte, Quebec City, Quebec Galerie Daniel, Montreal, Quebec
1986	Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1985	Galerie Daniel, Montreal, Quebec
1984	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1983	Arras Gallery, New York City, New York Galerie Lacerte-Guimont, Quebec City, Quebec Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario
1982	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1981	Galerie Don Stewart, Montreal, Quebec Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario
1979	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Robertson Galleries, Ottawa, Ontario
1977	Goldmann Gallery, Haifa, Israel
1976	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Galerie Gilles Corbeil, Montreal, Quebec
1975	Arras Gallery, New York City, New York Modern Art Gallery, Old Jaffa, Israel Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1974	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec
1973	Pucker/Safrai Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
1972	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec
1971	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario Modern Art Gallery, Old Jaffa, Israel Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1969	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1968	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec
1967	Galerie Dresdnere, Toronto, Ontario
1966	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec
1964	Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec Pollock Gallery, Toronto, Ontario

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Chaki has participated in over 450 group exhibitions in galleries across North and South America, Europe and the Middle East since 1959, including Museo do Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Quebec, and France Salon d'Art Moderne, Paris, France.

MUSEUMS & COLLECTIONS

Abitibi-Price, Toronto Adath Israel Congregation, Montreal (Stained Glass) Aird & Berlis, Toronto Aldo Group, Montréal Avmor, Montreal Astral Media, Montreal Beaverbrook Art Gallery, New Brunswick Beit Yad leBanim Museum, Holon Ben-Gurion University, Beersheba (mural) Bentall 5, Vancouver Beth Tikvah, Montreal Brookfield Asset Management Inc. Calgary Petroleum Club, Calgary Campbell, Godfrey & Lewtas, Toronto Canadian Consulate, New York Canadian Embassy, Argentina CIL Collection, Montreal Claridge, Montreal Coca-Cola Limited, Montreal Concordia University, Montreal Concordia University – JMSB Tunnel Project (Stained Glass) Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem, Montreal (Tapestry) Cormark Securities Inc. Desjardins Ducharme, Montreal Digital Equipment, Toronto	Eretz Israel Museum, Israel Fogler, Rubinoff, Toronto Fort Lauderdale Museum, Florida Gaz Métropolitain, Montréal General Electric, Toronto Heather James Fine Art, Jackson WY Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto Hotel Intercontinental, Toronto Husky Oil, Calgary Hydro Québec, Montreal Imperial Oil Limited, Toronto Jerusalem City Hall, Israel Jewish General Hospital, Montreal La Corporation du Groupe La Laurentienne, Montréal Lavalin Inc, Montreal Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal Loewen, Ondaatje. McCutcheon, Toronto Loto-Québec Collection, Montreal Melissa Morgan Fine Art, Palm Desert CA Montefiore Club, Montreal Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Mouvement Desjardins, Québec Murray Axmith, Toronto Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal Musée d'Art Juif, Paris Musée de Toulon, France	Musée de foyer d'Israël, Belgium Musée du Bas-Saint-Laurent Museo de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro National Assembly, Québec City Olympia and York Petrocan, Calgary Philadelphia Museum Plutonic Power Corporation Reitman Collection, Montreal Rose Museum, Boston Royal Bank of Canada, Montreal Royal Bank of Canada, Place Ville-Marie, Montreal (commission) Security Pacific Bank, Toronto Senvest Capital Inc., Montreal Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, Montreal (Tapestry) Shell Resources, Calgary SOQUIP, Montreal SOQUIP, Quebec The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Ontario Tory, Tory & Bennington, Toronto Université de Montréal, Montreal University of New Brunswick Museum, Fredericton, New Brunswick West-Sun Capital Collection, Montreal
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Front/Back Cover: ORANGE MOUNTAIN MEETS BLUE MOUNTAIN oil on canvas, 80 x 136 in.

CREDITS

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For all works in exhibition, please visit [odonwagnergallery.com](http://odonwagnergallery.com)

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