Surrealism

The Persistence of Memory by Salvador Dali; 1931; oil on canvas.
Samuel Bak is a surrealist painter who is renowned for his representations of Jewish experience during and after World War II. His paintings are heavy with symbolism, and piecing together all the symbols into a single interpretation can be like piecing together a puzzle.
The art of Samuel Bak entrances. It also disquiets.

Viewers find no easy meanings here, only questions. In his works intimate worlds, grand landscapes, symbolic narratives, and personal artifacts have been destroyed, and yet provisionally pieced back together.

From SAMUEL BAK and the ART OF THE QUESTION by DANNA NOLAN FEWELL, Drew University and GARY A. PHILLIPS, Wabash College
- Dismembered figures of flesh, metal, wood, and stone.
- Broken pottery,
- Rusted keys,
- Petrified teddy bears,
- Discarded shoes,
- Floating rocks,
- Uprooted trees.
- Splintered chess pieces.
- Fractured rainbows.
- Books turned buildings,
- Tablets turned tombstones,
- Memorial candles turned crematoria.
- Mute musical instruments,
- Flightless doves,
- Mechanized, immobile angels,
- Crucified children,
- Ladders leading nowhere.

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In Their Own Image by Samuel Bak, 2007, Oil on canvas, 30 x 24"
Torn by Samuel Bak
2008, Oil on canvas,
30 x 40”
Banishment III by Samuel Bak, 1999-2008, Oil on canvas, 50 x 75"
Creation of Wartime III by Samuel Bak, 1999-2008, Oil on canvas, 50 x 75”
Alone by Samuel Bak
Family Tree I by Samuel Bak
1995
Oil on canvas
The Ghetto by Samuel Bak
1976
Oil on canvas
Smoke by Samuel Bak
1977
Oil on linen
A Train by Samuel Bak
1992
Mixed media on paper
Destinies
by Samuel Bak
YIZKOR THEME, 1992 by Samuel Bak
Oil on Linen
From a series of “Study” by Samuel Bak
Elegy III by Samuel Bak
CROSSED OUT II, 2007
by Samuel Bak
Oil on Canvas
DETAIL The Family, 1974, Oil on canvas
DETAIL The Family, 1974, Oil on canvas
DETAIL The Family, 1974, Oil on canvas
DETAIL The Family, 1974, Oil on canvas