

Basic Detail Report



[Untitled]

Date

1942-1945

Primary Maker

Okubo, Benji

Medium

oil, canvas

Description

Stretched and unframed.;Image of a giant hand reaching down from yellow swirling clouds in the sky to grasp a struggling green skinned man with red hair above landscape. Dressed in an orange shirt and salmon pants, the barefoot man reaches up with his proper right hand to grasp at cloud at right. Below, a lake of green water is surrounded by dusty pink mountains. Tiny yellow

buildings rest on the edge of the lake and what appears to be barely discernable figures crowd the edge of the painting. Pale moon rises in background behind a dead and gnarled tree in foreground right. The painting is structured very dramatically with the diagonal line of the enormous fist and the diagonal line of the writhing man crating an "x" in the center of the canvas. The bright colors of the man and the clouds contrast with the somber darkness of the giant hand. The style of the painting is naturalistic surrealism -- a 20th century art movement in which recognizable scenes are transformed into dreamlike or nightmarish images.;The painting seems to be an antiwar or anti concentration camp statement. The man is struggling but he is powerless to fight the giant fist that encloses him. Although the man writes and claws at the air, he has nowhere to go except into a barren landscape with a dead tree. The tree, once a living symbol of life and vitality, is a wretched reminder of what once was. The giant hand is like the hand of God or fate of destiny -- an unstoppable force that has ultimate control over the lives of man. The tiny people in the background seem to be watching this struggle, but it seems clear that man will not be the victor of his fate. In the same way that the Japanese Americans were virtually powerless pawns manipulated by the power of the government and entrapped in concentration camps, the man is trapped by powers stronger than himself. It appears that this painting is a metaphor for the Japanese Americans during World War II.

Dimensions

H: 14 in, W: 12 in