



MARTIN BAROOSHIAN

ARTWORK TRUST



Revelation
by Martin Barooshian
1960

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THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON MAKES LANDMARK ADDITION ACQUIRING OIL PAINTING *REVELATION* (1960) BY MARTIN BAROOSHIAN

BOSTON (July 21, 2026)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA) and the Martin Barooshian Artwork Trust are pleased to announce the MFA’s acquisition of Martin Barooshian’s oil painting *Revelation* (1960), a landmark addition to its permanent collection. Among the earliest works from Barooshian’s mature period, *Revelation* shows his distinctive visual language coming fully into view: a vibrant ever-shifting world of biomorphic forms, fantastical figures, symbolic imagery, layered patterns, and bold color. *Revelation* joins 36 Barooshian works on paper already at the MFA, deepening the museum’s commitment to an artist whose full significance is only now receiving the institutional recognition it deserves.

Revelation offers a vivid reminder that postwar American art was richer, stranger, and more alive than dominant narratives have long suggested. In place of the scale, gesture, and spectacle of postwar modernism, Barooshian’s visual language is rooted in density, psychological and emotional engagement, and a vision of nature as a vital, interconnected force—resisting categorization and proposing a fundamentally different model for American art. Barooshian traced a parallel path that moved fluidly through abstraction, figuration, symbolism, and organic form, shaped by sources ranging from Renaissance and Baroque art to Symbolism, Surrealism, Arshile Gorky, comics, cinema, and the anxieties of the Cold War era.

Revelation brings this approach into focus. Rather than literally illustrating the biblical narrative, Barooshian transforms it into a fluid, non-linear cosmos. Within this space, shifting biomorphic forms merge and collide to give shape to themes of apocalypse, judgment, rupture, and renewal in a language unmistakably his own. Lush, buttery passages of painterly richness alternate with intricate patterning on a strategically flattened picture plane, underscoring *Revelation*’s compositional complexity and reflecting Barooshian’s unabashed “more is more” philosophy. *Revelation* shows a master riding a razor’s edge between restraint and excess, precision and chaos.

Michael Russo, Curator of the Martin Barooshian Artwork Trust, highlighted the painting’s contrasts: “*Revelation* is quintessential Barooshian—a bold, expansive, and dynamic work that’s alive with wild energy, which also invites quiet, intimate engagement and deep personal involvement. We’re delighted that *Revelation* has found a home at the MFA.”

(Continued)



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Barooshian (1929–2022) was no outsider. A Boston native, he trained under the influential Karl Zerbe at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, under S.W. Hayter at Atelier 17, and at Atelier Jean Pons in Paris—immersed in the most rigorous artistic traditions of the postwar period. He was at the center of the New York art world, leading the professional workshop at the Pratt Institute Print Center, shaping generations of artists, and counting Willem de Kooning among his friends.

Despite his prominence in the New York art scene, Barooshian resisted its dominant trends. While many of his contemporaries embraced a pure abstraction that rejected history and the human form, Barooshian carved out his own path. By fusing rich international art traditions and history with contemporary American visual culture into a singular, cohesive language, Barooshian kept figures, symbolism, narrative suggestion, and mythic scale alive on the canvas. In doing so, he expanded the creative possibilities of his era, anchoring a visionary, symbolic, and deeply layered style firmly within the story of postwar American art.

The timing of this acquisition by the MFA is not incidental. Museum curators and scholars are now re-evaluating the postwar timeline, showing renewed interest in artists like Barooshian who broaden its scope. Claire Howard, inaugural Hansjörg Wyss Curator of Modern Art at the MFA, commented, “As the MFA redefines its presentation of twentieth-century art, we are thrilled to include Barooshian among the original and innovative voices that enhance our understanding of the period.”

Barooshian’s resistance now reads as prescience. The artistic vision Barooshian committed to across seven decades—biomorphic form, symbolic figuration, interiority, oblique narrative—is precisely what a vital strand of contemporary art is articulating today. As neo-surrealism endures as one of the defining currents of current practice, and as institutions worldwide undertake a long-overdue reassessment of who was written out of the postwar canon and why, *Revelation* arrives not merely as a historical correction but as a living document. Barooshian was outside the orthodoxies of his time because he was ahead of it. That gap is finally closing.

ABOUT MARTIN BAROOSHIAN

Martin Barooshian (1929–2022) was born in Chelsea, MA to immigrant survivors of the Armenian Genocide. He was trained at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston University, Tufts University, Atelier Jean Pons, and Atelier 17 in Paris. He has been called “Pablo Picasso meets Stan Lee...who has always defined his own style” by *Boston Globe* critic Cate McQuaid. Addison Gallery curator Susan Faxon described Barooshian as “an artist whose sweep was wide...and whose exuberance, inventiveness, imagination, and artistic commitment were boundless.” He was taught painting by Karl Zerbe, lithography by Gaston Dorflinger, and intaglio etching by Stanley Hayter; he was friends with Armin Landeck and Gerald Geerlings, Willem de Kooning and Paul Jenkins; he taught Barnett Newman to make lithographs. His story is the story of mid-20th-century American art. Across a prolific 70-year career, Barooshian developed a singular cross-media practice built around organic, generative image-systems. By fusing painting and printmaking with myth, humor, history, and biomorphic invention, his distinctive vision opens up an essential yet largely overlooked chapter of postwar American art. Barooshian’s art is in the collections of many major museums in addition to the MFA, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY), the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery, and the Addison Gallery. More information is available in the book *Martin Barooshian: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints, 1948–1970* by Michael Russo, and at www.martinbarooshian.org. The International Society for the Study of Surrealism (ISSS) hosted a panel discussion on Barooshian at its 2024 annual conference in Paris, “Rediscovering the Biomorphic Surrealism of Martin Barooshian” which can be viewed on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

[For more details on the permanent collection’s latest addition, view the MFA’s official announcement.](#)

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