



Sam Borenstein, *Self-Portrait Composition*, 1946,
oil on canvas laid on panel, 86.5 x 71.3 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Responding to the vibrant culture of Montreal, Sam Borenstein's (1908–1969) works exhibit a unique and expressive modernist approach to painting in their pulsating colour and explorations of nature. In *Self-Portrait Composition* (1946), Borenstein depicts himself with a paint palette alongside his wife, Judith, on the left and his father, Simcha, on the right behind him. An image of a small horse on the right is superimposed on Borenstein's and his father's bodies. The four

overlapping figures are situated in the foreground, while a rural landscape forms the background. The cold blue tones intensify the warm red, yellow and orange tones of the faces, the paint palette and the house in the background, creating a sense of unity among these elements. Borenstein exaggerates the shape of his father's head, giving him an alien-like resemblance and presence. However, their similar facial features mark their biological connection to one another. In this self-portrait, Borenstein examines the significance of his relationships with his father and wife to his self-identity.

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