

Chaim Goldberg

Chaim Goldberg (March 20, 1917 - June 26, 2004) a Jewish artist, painter, sculptor, and engraver, who is best known for being a chronicler of Jewish life in the small Polish village, or Shtetl Kazimierz-Dolny in southern Poland, where he was born, and painter of Holocaust era art. Goldberg is best remembered through his life-like depictions of the shtetl's colorful characters, and the unique small village lifestyle that has vanished, however his range of themes and other works is often overlooked.

Young Chaim's life changed after his drawings were discovered on the walls of his father's shoemaker workshop in 1931 by Saul Silberstein - a student of Sigmund Freud who was doing post doctorate work on his book, Jewish village Mannerisms. He needed to have his shoes repaired and noticed the numerous drawings that were pinned to the walls by the pious father, and decided to wait for the young artist. He contacted influential individuals to provide support to the fourteen-year-old artist. Wealthy patrons, such as Felyx Kronstein - Supreme Court Judge and a newspaper publisher recognized his great talent and sponsored his education at the "Mehoffer Krakow High School for Fine Arts", and later at the "Academy of Fine Arts" in Warsaw, where he was the youngest student (at 17) to enter the prestigious school. World War II interrupted his development, and he became a refugee in Siberia. After the war, he was baled to emigrate to Israel, where his creative efforts finally got under way.

In 1967, Goldberg arrived in the United States, and continued to paint, and create line engravings of his village characters, as well as sculpt. He became a citizen of the United States in 1973. In 1974, inspired by the "Emmet Kelly Jr. Circus", his interests widened, and he began a series of work on the "Circus" (the "dance" theme, and a passionate response to the culture shock that he found himself confronted with, by living in New York, 'the great human jungle,' as he called it). I. B. Singer, the 1978 - Nobel Prize Laureate hailed Chaim Goldberg as the true visual story-teller of the shtetl, "Chaim Goldberg came from the shtetl and remembers its every detail. He is never abstract but is true to the objects and their divine order. His work is enriching Jewish art and the image of our tradition."

His body of work on the dance theme, such as paintings, watercolors and sculpture, carved in wood, aggregate concrete is a testament to an artist who had been able to escape the stereotyping of a Jewish artist. His "Culture Shock" series exemplifies his talent to make visual commentaries in freehand drawings on subjects that have filled volumes of books.

In 1997, at the age of 80, despite a very active lifestyle filled with daily exercise, and amidst his greatest drive to paint a series of large oil paintings about life before World War II, he was diagnosed with a disabling illness, to which he finally succumbed seven painful and suffering-filled years. He died in 2004 in Boca Raton, Florida.

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