

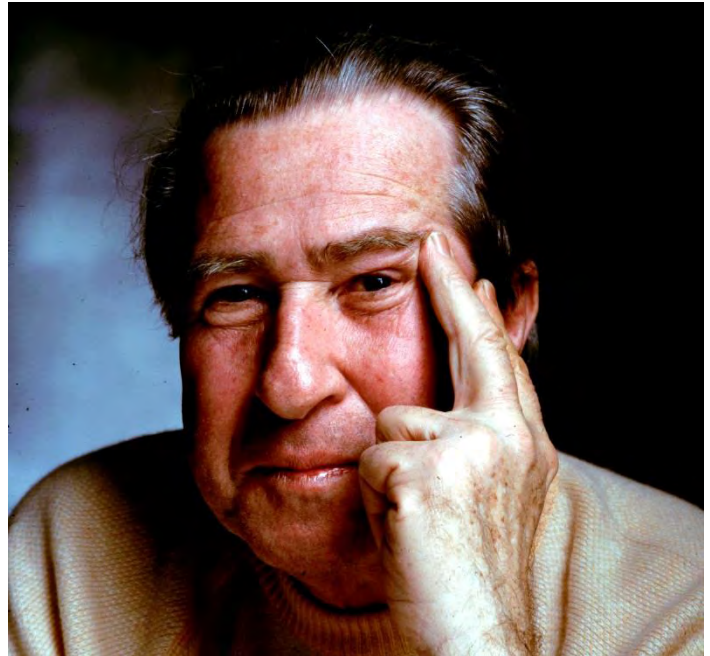
Michael Goldberg (1924-2007)

*"I like the physicality of what I'm doing. I like the feeling of applying material to a surface. I push the paint around hard. I like that resistance."*¹

Born Sylvan Irwin Goldberg in 1924 and raised in the Bronx, **Michael Goldberg** began taking Saturday art classes at the Art Students League in 1938. A gifted student who read Lautréamont, Baudelaire, and Nerval, Goldberg finished high school in 1939 at the age of fourteen and enrolled in City College. He soon found New York's jazz scene to be a far more compelling environment, and he began skipping classes to frequent the Harlem jazz clubs near campus. Goldberg's love of jazz would become a lifelong passion and a key component to his approach to composition in his paintings. From 1940 to 1942, like many of the leading artists of the New York School, Goldberg studied with Hans Hofmann. In 1943, he put his pursuit of painting on hold and enlisted in the US Army. Serving in North Africa, Burma, and India, Goldberg received a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star before being discharged in 1946. After his service, he traveled and worked in Venezuela before returning to the United States, settling back into New York City, and resuming studies at the Art Students League and Hofmann's school.

Living downtown and frequenting the Cedar Bar, Goldberg befriended many of the artists of the New York School. In 1951, his work was included in the groundbreaking *Ninth Street Show*, co-organized by Leo Castelli, Conrad Marca-Relli, and the Eighth Street Club, and featuring the work of—among others—Hofmann, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, and Franz Kline. In 1953, the Tibor de Nagy Gallery gave Goldberg his first solo exhibition, but it was not until the late 1950s that his work gained widespread recognition. Indeed, in 1956, his friendship with fellow painter Norman Bluhm led to the purchase of seventeen paintings from Goldberg's studio by art collector Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.; Martha Jackson Gallery began representing him shortly thereafter. In 1960, he collaborated with close friend and poet Frank O'Hara on *Odes*, a book of poems and prints; in 1961, he spent time as a visiting artist at the University of California, Berkeley; and in 1962, Mark Rothko gave Goldberg his spacious studio on the Lower Eastside at 222 Bowery, which Goldberg later bought. In 1969, he met artist Lynn Umlauf; they married ten years later, and both began teaching shortly thereafter at the School of Visual Arts. Goldberg remained on staff at SVA until his death. In the 1980s, he and Umlauf began spending long periods of time in Tuscany, during which Goldberg would frequently drive to Siena and spend part of an afternoon looking at the frescoes and paintings that dominate the city. These excursions were vital to Goldberg, who conceived of painting as a dialogue—with artists who had come before him as well as with contemporary artists and viewers. Like the artist himself, Goldberg's paintings continue to invite anyone interested to share the boundless passion their creator had for art and conversation.

Michael Goldberg died of a heart attack on December 31, 2007 in Manhattan, amid a resurgent interest in his work. Since his death, his work has been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions. In the past decade, notable retrospectives include *Ode to Michael Goldberg: Selective Thievery and the Practice of Looking* at the Anderson Gallery, University at Buffalo, State University of New York in Buffalo, NY (2008) and *Perpetual Motion: Michael Goldberg* at the University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach, CA (2010). Most recently, his work was the subject of a major exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville, Florida (2013). *Abstraction over Time: The Paintings of Michael Goldberg*,



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curated by Marcelle Polednik, was accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with essays by Polednik, Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Karen Wilkin and a statement by Irving Sandler. Michael Rosenfeld Gallery held its first solo exhibition of Goldberg's work in 2015 with *Michael Goldberg: Making His Mark, Paintings and Drawings: 1985-2005*. His second solo exhibition, *Michael Goldberg: End to End, The 1950s & 2000s*, exploring two defining decades of his artistic output, is currently on view at the gallery.

With international prominence, his work appears in the permanent collections of numerous museums including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo, NY); Art Institute of Chicago (Chicago, IL); Baltimore Museum of Art (Baltimore, MD); Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin (Austin, TX); Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn, NY); Chrysler Museum of Art (Norfolk, VA); Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland, OH); Fogg Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA); High Museum of Art (Atlanta, GA); Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC); Mississippi Museum of Art (Jackson, MS); Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles, CA); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, TX); Museum of Modern Art (Jerusalem, Israel); Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, CA); Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia, PA); Seattle Art Museum (Seattle, WA); Smithsonian American Art Museum (Washington, DC); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York, NY); Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art (Hartford, CT); Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN); Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, NY); Williams College Museum of Art, Williams College (Williamstown, MA); and Yale University Art Gallery, Yale University (New Haven, CT).

Michael Rosenfeld Gallery LLC is the exclusive representative of the Estate of Michael Goldberg.

¹ Michael Goldberg in Saul Ostrow, "Michael Goldberg by Saul Ostrow," *BOMB*, April 1, 2001, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/michael-goldberg/>, accessed January 2018



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