

life

ARTS NOTES

Perry So to be the guest conductor for the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra **Column, F-2**



Artist's career in expressionism gets a MOCA reappraisal

Michael Goldberg was called 'old guard,' but wasn't

By Charlie Patton
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From the time she became director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville in February 2011, one of Marcelle Polednik's goals was to mount a retrospective exhibit that would "reappraise an artist who has fallen off the radar."

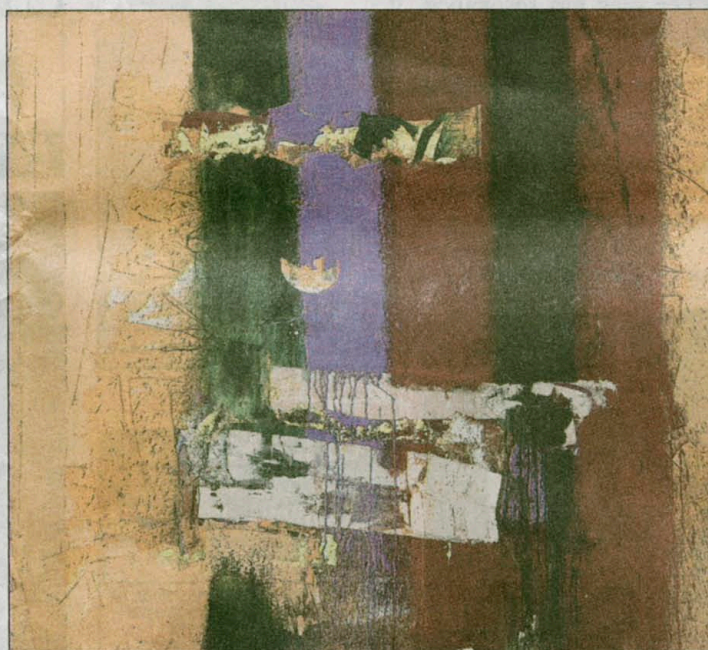
The artist she has picked for such a reappraisal is Michael Goldberg, an abstract expressionist who died at 83 in 2007. His career is the subject of "Abstraction Over Time: The Paintings of Michael Goldberg," which opened Saturday at MOCA.

Part of the reason Goldberg was forgotten despite remaining a very active artist up to his death is that he was given the perhaps-unfair label "second generation abstract expressionist." Goldberg was one of the 64 artists in-

cluded in the Ninth Street Show, an important exhibit that took place in the late spring of 1951 and featured such giants of abstract expressionism as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko. Only four of the artists in the show were younger than Goldberg, who was born on Christmas Eve in 1924 (he died on New Year's Eve in 2007).

Also, as Polednik notes in an essay written for the exhibit's catalog, "Goldberg's rise to prominence coincided with the gradual waning of abstract expressionism's influence and the advent of new styles such as pop art and minimalism. Despite the changing artistic landscape around him, for over six decades Goldberg persisted in painting in an abstract style. This seeming obstinacy and impervious-

GOLDBERG continues on F-2



1963's "The Bed (Buffalo)" from "Abstraction Over Time: The Paintings of Michael Goldberg."

ABSTRACTION OVER TIME: THE PAINTINGS OF MICHAEL GOLDBERG

Where: Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville, 333 N. Laura St.
When: 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday.
Cost: \$8 adults, \$5 seniors, students, military both active and retired; free to members, to UNF students, to all college students from 1:30-4 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; to Bank of America cardholders on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month; from 5-9 p.m. during Art Walk on the first Wednesday of each month.
Information: (904) 366-6911; mocajacksonville.org

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"There's the 'pat on the back' school of painting. ... It doesn't move me."

Michael Goldberg.
Abstract expressionist

GOLDBERG

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ness to change led to Goldberg's permanent categorization as a member of the old guard. ...

"Abstraction Over Time" is the first retrospective that looks at the entirety of Goldberg's career, not just his early work, Polednik said. She believes that what the exhibit, which includes pieces from six decades, the 1950s through the 2000s, will reveal is that far from being stuck in the past, Goldberg was constantly evolving as an artist. He changed styles, changed materials and changed methods throughout his career and remained an active artist to the end. As Polednik puts it in her essay, the one constant in his career was "a perpetual emphasis on nimble, improvisational reinvention."

In a 1958 article titled "The Canvas Plane," Goldberg wrote that he was temperamentally uninterested in repeating himself. "There's the 'pat on the back' school of painting: the painter doing exactly what he can do well. ...

It doesn't move me. I'm for the upward and onward school, a question of arrivals and departures."

Polednik became interested in Goldberg while working as curator of the Monterey Museum of Art. A New Yorker most of his life, Goldberg had spent time teaching at the University of California Berkeley and his work was included in a Monterey Museum exhibit about artists who

had worked on both coasts. When she got to Jacksonville, she discovered that Preston Haskell, a longtime MOCA board member who is now a trustee emeritus, had a Goldberg painting in his extensive collection of modern art.

Haskell's piece is one of 38 MOCA has borrowed for "Abstraction Over Time." Several of the borrowed pieces come from Goldberg's estate and have never been publicly exhibited. A catalog for the show will include essays by Polednik; Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, a British painter and art critic; Irving Sandler, an American art critic and educator; and Karen Wilkin, a New York based curator and art critic.

Polednik said that once the exhibit, which was co-curated by Polednik and MOCA curator Ben Thompson, completes its run at MOCA on Jan. 5, she hopes to package the exhibit and show it at other museums.

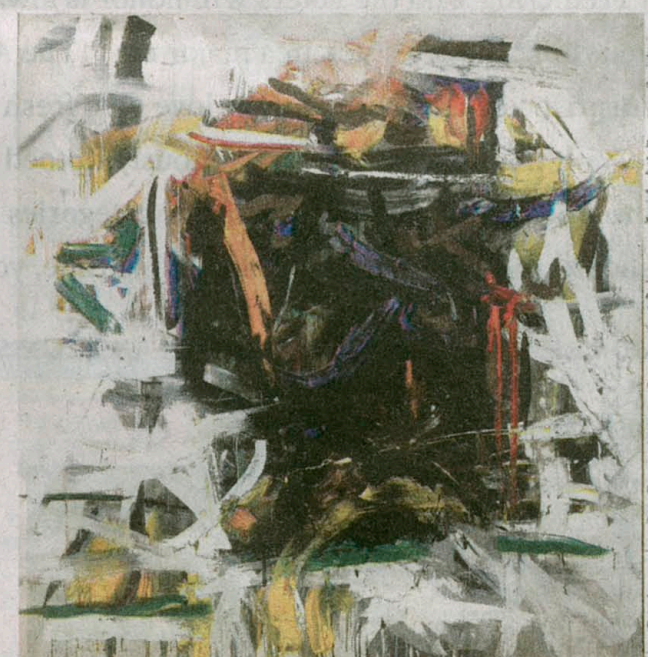
There will be staged readings directed by Ian Mairs of the play "Red" at 7 p.m. Wednesday-Friday at MOCA. "Red" is set in Mark Rothko's New York art studio in 1958-59 as he was painting a group of murals for the Four Seasons restaurant.

The play has resonance for those interested in Goldberg not only because both he and Rothko were abstract expressionists of the New York School but because Rothko's studio became Goldberg's studio in the early 1960s.

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"The Fierce Grizzly" by abstract expressionist Michael Goldberg.



"Summer House" by Michael Goldberg, a 1958 painting.



1993 painting "Bowery Days" by Michael Goldberg.



2000 painting "Zutto" by Michael Goldberg.



1982 bronze powder and chalk, "Le Grotto Vecchie VIII," by Michael Goldberg