

# Park Row Gallery

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CHATHAM, NEW YORK:

## **DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN ARTIST SIGMUND ABELES IN JOINT EXHIBITION IN CHATHAM, NY**

**The distinguished American artist Sigmund Abeles will be the subject of a joint exhibition at Park Row Gallery and the Joyce Goldstein Gallery, both in Chatham, NY.**

***Passionate Lives / Passionate Lines* will be on exhibit from May 23<sup>rd</sup> through June 27<sup>th</sup> 2009, giving viewers a broad but converging perspective of the range and depth of the art of Sigmund Abeles. There will be a gala reception with the artist at both galleries on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from 4pm – 6pm, and the public is cordially invited to attend this celebration.**

Sigmund Abeles was born in New York City in 1934, but moved to South Carolina when he was two years old, and was raised as an only child by his mother. As a young boy he fell in love with horses and with the human figure. So he began drawing both, as a way to know them better. After years of studying art and drawing incessantly, it's not surprising to learn that drawing is as essential to Abeles' art as breathing is to his life. "Drawing is touching at a distance," the artist has said, and it seems that the closer he gets to his subjects, the greater the intensity and intimacy of each line he depicts.

As a humanist with a strong social conscience, Abeles has been influenced and inspired by other artists of the humanist tradition, including Rembrandt, Ingres, Degas, Kollwitz, Schiele, Kokoschka and Lucian Freud. And as a young artist in NYC in the late 1950's, he swam against the popular current of Abstract Expressionism, holding onto the emotional expressiveness and narrative content of his representational style. The writer Issac Bashevis Singer once observed, "In a time when many artists try their best to be abstract, obscure, and detached from human suffering and human efforts, Sigmund Abeles has the courage to portray real people and even to tell a story in the way artists did for generations. His roots are attached to the soil."

Park Row Gallery and the Joyce Goldstein Gallery are honored to present *Passionate Lives / Passionate Lines*, a joint exhibition of the work of Sigmund Abeles. The exhibit on view at Park Row Gallery includes approximately twenty paintings, pastels and etchings that attest to Abeles' passionate and enduring engagement with horses and the human figure. People and horses are subjects that the artist knows and loves, although he says he was in awe of the power and beauty of horses long before he knew what art was. There are several pastels in the show portraying people with horses, including, "Winter Eve with Mare and Couple," a large and poignant portrait of a horse in the moonlight on a clear winter night and a couple warmly embracing in the background. The etchings include "My Rolling Mare," which depicts a mare on her back with legs in the air, and "Sometimes I Have Difficulty Telling Art From Reality," a fascinating portrait of psychological complexity drawn with such grace and virtuosity that it's difficult to look away. Rounding out the show are a number of oil paintings including, "Mare in the Mist," and "Self-Portrait with Horse's Skull," a compelling picture of the artist with a soulful stare.

The work of Sigmund Abeles at the Joyce Goldstein Gallery focuses on portraits of women, with nearly a dozen paintings and pastels, and several small terra cotta nudes pulled quickly from the clay. Many of the models the artist works with are family members and friends, which explains

the emotional power and resonance of the work. Titles such as, “Nude in Martha’s Vineyard Garden,” “She and Her Shadow,” “Woman of the Middle East,” and “Woman with Pears,” suggest the subject matter at hand. But it is the artist’s profound empathy and mastery of line that reveals a deeper identity and adds gravity to the character of these alluring portraits of women.

As Robert M. Doty so eloquently expressed in an essay on the artist, “Abeles believes in art that is about life, about the human condition. He has contemplated humanity’s weaknesses, exaltations and irresistible attractions in order to gain a renewed understanding of the contradictions that exist in the modern world. With the aid of intense perception, he seeks out intimate situations, moments in time, episodes of human drama, the emotional nuances of life around him and transforms them into significant images.”

Sigmund Abeles divides his time between studios in Columbia County, NY and New York City. He received his BA in Art from the University of South Carolina in 1955, and an MFA from Columbia University in 1957. He is a Professor Emeritus at the University of New Hampshire, and was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from Coastal Carolina University in 2000. Mr. Abeles exhibits his work nationally and internationally, and is the recipient of an extensive list of scholarships, awards, prizes and grants. He is a long-standing member of the prestigious National Academy of Design, and in 2006 was honored with the Degas Society Award by the Pastel Society of America. Abeles’ work is represented in over 100 public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Whitney Museum of Art, NY; Montclair Art Museum, NJ; Museum of Fine Arts, MA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA; Yale University Art Gallery, CT; Fogg Art Museum, MA; Williams College Museum of Art, MA; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; and the Museo de Arte, Ponce, PR.

**Park Row Gallery** is located at 2 Park Row, adjacent to Main Street in the charming town of Chatham, NY. Exhibiting some of the finest artists in the region, Park Row Gallery offers a full range of services to their clients. Gallery hours are Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday, from 11am – 5pm. For further information, please contact Park Row Gallery at (518) 392-4800, or visit: <http://www.parkrowgallery.com>

The **Joyce Goldstein Gallery** is located at 16 Main Street in Chatham. Gallery hours are Thursday through Saturday, from 12pm – 5pm, and by appointment. For further information, please call the Joyce Goldstein Gallery at 518-392-2250 or visit: <http://www.joycegoldsteingallery.com>