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Chuck Fishman: Roots, Resilience and Renewal A Portrait of Polish Jews, 1975-2016

Jointly organized with Jewish Studies at Fordham University

September 17, 2017-January 7, 2018

Opening Reception and Photographer's Talk: Sunday, September 17, 2017, 1:30-3 p.m.

At the Derfner Judaica Museum

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Chuck Fishman, *Participants in the fifth annual March of Remembrance, commemorating the 74th anniversary of the first massive deportation to the extermination camp in Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto, passing the Anielewicz tram stop, named after Mordechai Anielewicz, the leader of the first armed action of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.* Warsaw, 2016. © Chuck Fishman
www.chuckfishman.com.

Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale, in conjunction with Jewish Studies at Fordham University, is pleased to announce its latest exhibition, *Chuck Fishman: Roots, Resilience and Renewal—A Portrait of Polish Jews, 1975-2016*, on view at the Derfner Judaica Museum from September 17, 2017-January 7, 2018. A reception and talk by the photographer will take place on Sunday, September 17, from 1:30-3 p.m. in the Museum, located at 5901 Palisade Avenue in the Riverdale section of The Bronx. This event is free and open to the public. R.S.V.P. 718.581.1596 or art@hebrewhome.org. Photo I.D. required for admission.

The exhibition includes 36 black and white photographs made during multiple trips Fishman took to Poland over a period of more than 40 years, first as a young college student and later as a professional photojournalist. He first traveled to Poland in the summer of 1975 during the Communist era, accompanied by a writer, in search of what remained of Jewish life and culture in a country that Jews had inhabited for 1000 years, a once-vibrant community whose history and legacy lay on the brink of extinction.

What Fishman found were synagogues, locked, decaying and/or abandoned, and cemeteries in ruin; older Jews, living on pensions, by and large “underground” and with scant communal resources: the “kosher kitchens” in Warsaw, Krakow and Wroclaw; a Jewish club in Lodz; Friday night or Shabbat services in Warsaw and Krakow, and the Yiddish theater in Warsaw. That first journey resulted in the publication of *Polish Jews: The Final Chapter* (McGraw-Hill and New York University Press, 1977). Returning several times between 1975 and 1983, Fishman’s images provide rare glimpses into Jewish life during a period when Jews in the West had little or no access to their Polish forebears in the post-Holocaust era. His more recent images, made 30 years later upon his arrival in 2013—more than two decades after the fall of Communism—chronicle a spiritual and cultural “return to identity” that Fishman says, “would have been unthinkable before.” His latest work speaks “to themes of resilience and renewal, exploring and elucidating the myriad faces and facets of recovery and regeneration,” he explains, as younger generations are discovering their Jewish roots, and what it means “being Jewish.”



Chuck Fishman, Ludwik Berlinski (left) and Maurycy Jam (right) leaving the Remu Synagogue after the last Saturday service of 1978. Krakow, December 1978.



Chuck Fishman, *Mosses Lekker, caretaker of the Jewish Cemetery, Lodz, 1975.*

Although color and digital printing is the medium of choice today, Fishman, in his recent and current work, continues to use black and white film as he had in the '70s and '80s, intentionally seeking a "cohesive, visual continuity throughout the images, and across the decades." He both processes his own film and makes his own exhibition prints, and emphasizes that working with film—each of the original negatives—is of primal importance when crafting archival, gelatin silver photographic prints.

About the artist

Chuck Fishman has focused on social and political issues with a strong humanistic concern. His work has been extensively published, exhibited

and collected worldwide, and has earned him prestigious World Press Photo Foundation medals four times. His photographs have appeared on the covers of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *Newsweek*, *The London Sunday Times*, *The Economist*, and numerous others, and have been selected for publication in the American Photography and Communication Arts juried annuals. Fishman's work is included in the collections of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery; the United Nations; POLIN: The Museum of the History of Polish Jews; The Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona; The Studio Museum in Harlem; and Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University, among many others, as well as in private and corporate collections.

Fishman's first monograph, *Polish Jews: The Final Chapter*, was published in 1977 in the United States. He has worked on book projects for publishers worldwide, from France to Singapore to Papua New Guinea. Exhibitions of his work include solo shows in the U.S. and Europe, and influential group exhibitions globally, including the International Center of Photography in New York City and the Pingyao International Photography Festival in China. He lives in New York with his wife, Susan.



Chuck Fishman, *Newly-appointed American-Israeli Rabbi Avi Baumol (far right) introducing a Torah scroll to third- and fourth-generation post-Holocaust Jews. His first time teaching Sunday school at the Jewish Community Center (JCC). Krakow, 2013.*

About Hebrew Home at Riverdale

As a member of the American Alliance of Museums, the Hebrew Home at Riverdale by RiverSpring Health is committed to publicly exhibiting its art collection throughout its 32-acre campus, including the Derfner Judaica Museum and a sculpture garden overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. The Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection provides educational and cultural programming for residents of the Hebrew Home, their families and the general public from throughout New York City, its surrounding suburbs and visitors from elsewhere. RiverSpring Health is a nonprofit, non-sectarian geriatric organization serving more than 12,000 older adults in greater New York through its resources and community service programs. Museum hours: Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Art Collection and grounds open daily, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Call 718.581.1596 for holiday hours and to schedule group tours, or for further information, visit our website at <http://www.riverspringhealth.org/art>

About Jewish Studies at Fordham University

Jewish Studies at Fordham University nurtures a vibrant community of students and scholars in Jewish Studies at Fordham through classes, conferences, workshops, and student internships, while providing meaningful public programming for lay audiences. Thanks to innovative public programs and cross-institutional partnerships Jewish Studies at Fordham University has emerged as a leader in Jewish Studies and become an important venue for conversations and dialogue between the larger scholarly and lay communities. For more information about the program, and public events please visit www.fordham.edu/JewishStudies or email JewishStudies@fordham.edu



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