



Swallow Bird, 2020

# SEE ME

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAL CHELBIN

*Curated by Matthew Garson*

Roe Green Gallery  
Jewish Federation of Cleveland



# Michal Chelbin



Angel, Spain 2018

Michal Chelbin's exhibition, "SEE ME," explores the artist's play on one's identity. Chelbin's photography attempts to capture human stories in everyday life; the identities of people not in the mainstream, many of them belonging to the edge of society and existing in the space between the odd and the ordinary. Her main themes are not social or topical, but collective and mythical; she searches for people who have a legendary quality in them.

Chelbin's subjects are fragile androgynous bodies, the antithesis of the common fashion model, who carry the burden of youthful beauty on their narrow shoulders – sometimes light and delicate as a feather, often dark and viscous as tar.

The armor of high fashion, the symbol of the pinnacle of economic success, turns upon their bodies from a creation of splendor to a veil of discomfort. Chelbin's images are vehicles to address universal themes of family, ideas of normality, puberty, and the desire for fame.

She creates an informal scene in which her subjects directly confront the viewers, urging them to "See Me!" Her aim is to record a scene where there is a mixture of direct information and enigma, in which there are visual contrasts between young and old, large and small, regular and unique.

For Chelbin, the image is just the beginning; it's the gateway to a story waiting to be told, about a life full of contradictions on the battleground between fantasy and reality.



Jonathan Polin, left, and Rachel Goldberg in Jerusalem on Oct. 15. Their son Herch Goldberg-Polin, 23, is missing. Photograph by Michal Chelbin for TIME. The series has since been recognized by TIME as among the top photographs of 2023.

Michal Chelbin is a regular contributor to the world's leading publications, such as The New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker, BusinessWeek, GQ, The Guardian, The Sunday Times, The Financial Times, Le Monde and many others.

Time magazine approached her to photograph a story of the Israeli hostages taken on October 7, 2023. The cover story for Time was the most heartbreaking story Michal ever worked on. She went into the homes and photographed families who had loved ones kidnapped by Hamas. The raw pain is evident in her images. She thanks Time for giving these families a voice and also thanks Oded Plotnizki for producing this project.

Having Chelbin exhibit her work in the Roe Green Gallery gives strong credence that the Cleveland Israel Arts Connection selection of visual artists is not only relevant to current times, but also demonstrates our continued search for only the best artists to showcase in Cleveland.

**Matthew Garson**, curator is a fine art advisor and interior design consultant living in Cleveland, Ohio with over 30 years of experience.

In the 90s, he mentored under Toby Devan Lewis and became assistant curator of the Progressive Insurance Corporate Art Collection. In 2000, Matt established M%, a consulting firm, specializing in collecting emerging contemporary artists and designing innovative and provocative spaces for both private and corporate clients. He has owned and operated multiple galleries in both Cleveland and New York City, exhibiting artists from all over the world.



Matt has participated in countless art fairs from coast to coast, as well as producing his own art fair, Flow, a satellite of Art Basel - Miami. Over the years, he has been a member of various arts organizations and he and his husband Case are huge supporters of the arts and own an extensive art collection.

Matt is an original member of the Cleveland Israel Arts Connection and is currently chair of the the Visual Arts subcommittee. He most recently was the site coordinator for Culture Fix CLE. A hugely successful, city-wide visual art installation with Israeli artists Dede Banaid and Nitzan Mintz.



## MICHAL CHELBIN

1974 Born in Haifa, Israel  
2001 Graduated from the WIZO Academy of Design & Education in Haifa

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 "Sailboats and Swans," CLAMP, New York City  
"Michal Chelbin: Daydreamers," Chelouche Gallery, Tel Aviv
- 2022 "Michal Chelbin: In Their Own Words," Photo Is:rael, ENAV Cultural Center and CityGarden, Tel Aviv (Curated by Ya'ara Raz Haklai)  
"Make Believe," Chelouche Gallery, Jaffa, Israel
- 2021 "How to Dance the Waltz," CLAMP, New York City  
"Make Believe," Chelouche Gallery, Jaffa, Israel (Curated by Nira Itzhaki and Nimrod Vainer)
- 2015 "Raw Iron," Video Installation, Tel Aviv Museum of Art
- 2013 "Sailboats and Swans," Hellenic Center for Photography, Athens, Greece
- 2012 "Sailboats and Swans," Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York City
- 2010 "Strangely Familiar," Photographic Resource Center at Boston University  
"The Black Eye," Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York City  
"The Black Eye," M+B Gallery, Los Angeles "The Black Eye," Witzhausen Gallery, Amsterdam
- 2008 "Strangely Familiar," Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York City  
"Strangely Familiar," Tel Aviv Museum of Art
- 2007 "Strangely Familiar," Blue Sky Gallery, Portland, Oreland
- 2004 "Recent Photographs," Fahey Klein Gallery, Los Angeles  
"Vitalina and Friends," Lohamei Haghetaot Gallery, Israel
- 2002 "Lazarova," Yossi Milo Gallery, New York City  
"Lazarova," Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel-Aviv
- 2000 "Vitalina and Friends," Rosenfeld Gallery, Tel-Aviv



Photo credit: Gilad Bar Shalev

Chelbin has also been included in numerous group exhibitions and received countless awards for her work over the years. She has also had 4 Monographs published; *How to Dance the Waltz* in 2021, *Sailboats and Swans* in 2012, *The Black Eye* in 2010 and *Strangely Familiar: Acrobats, Athletes and Other Traveling Troupes* in 2008.

Chelbin can be found in many public and private collections, such as The Metropolitan Museum, New York City; LACMA, Los Angeles; The Getty Center, Los Angeles; Jewish Museum, New York City; Cleveland Museum of Art; Tel Aviv Museum; SFMOMA, San Francisco and more.



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