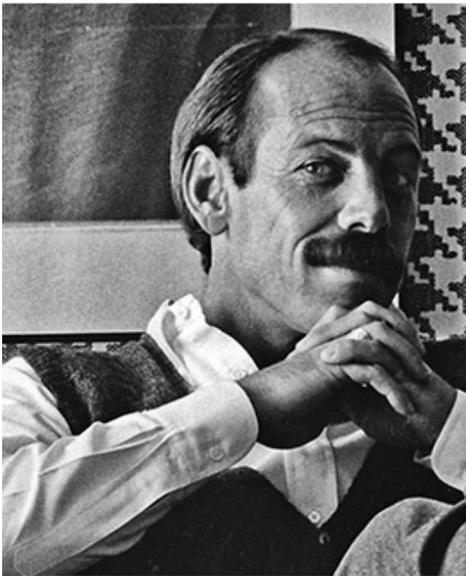


Ed Goldman: Michael Himovitz Park: An apt tribute to a dear friend

By Ed Goldman
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I thought I was going to get through reading the news release and general hoopla surrounding last Friday's dedication of a park in McKinley Village named for art gallery owner and arts advocate Michael Himovitz without getting overly emotional. Then I scrolled to his photo and lost it. I decided not to attend because I'd have been a mess at the event — and I'm pretty sure that others would have been, too, despite the pretty surroundings of the new community, which has already seen the dedication of a park to former Mayor — and still very much with us in his 90s — Burnett Miller. I wrote about that event here on Sept. 26.

About the photo: That enigmatic smile peeking out from under Himovitz's black moustache, his slouching pose, his fingers laced — Well, the combined effect for me was of him sitting across a coffee table, holding forth in his gravelly, compelling voice on any number of topics, though mainly art. The picture reminded me of what a void he left when he died in 1994 at the age of 45.

Himovitz's downtown Sacramento gallery was his beachhead and he had a peerless eye for what he called "dangerous" art (he simply meant not run-of-the-mill, since some of my own work was included in his inventory and shows and believe me, posed no threat to anyone). He opened a second gallery in Del Paso Heights that his surviving partner, Chuck Miller, eventually closed a few years after Himovitz died and not long before Chuck himself died.

Michael and Chuck had also opened, then closed, a gallery in Pavilions Shopping Center that Michael told me he ended up despising because its merchandise had to conform to the tastes of affluent suburban shoppers who were "into decorating, not living with art." He thought the vibe was more that of "a gift shop at a gallery, not an actual gallery."

Himovitz was one of the founders of 2nd Saturday. It may be hard to remember that before this monthly event morphed into the popular pub-crawl it's become, it was more of a salon-to-salon scavenger hunt for serious art collectors, aficionados and creators. Along with Judith Weintraub, who also had an eponymous downtown gallery, Michael also brought international painters and sculptors to Sacramento and took as much pride, care and taste in displaying their work as many of them had in making it.

Dozens of people can make this statement: "Michael was a dear friend of mine." For me, he most certainly was. My wife, daughter and I vacationed in Capitola with Michael, Chuck, and Michael's then-young kids, Julia and Lucas (from his marriage to the immensely talented photographer Melanie Mages). After we got home Jane and I agreed Michael and Chuck were among the best couples to vacation with because even when they bickered it was hilarious and never mean-spirited.

I think it's great that developer Phil Angelides is offering a tribute to him and other artists and art supporters at McKinley Village, and I urge you to go take a look at the park (the entrance to the development is off C Street near Tivoli Way in East Sac). Michael Himovitz provided the kind of spark that ignited our community, making it realize that the creativity it nurtures could preserve and enhance its identity for generations to come.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sacramento/news/2018/04/18/ed-goldman-michael-himovitz-park-an-apt-tribute-to.html>