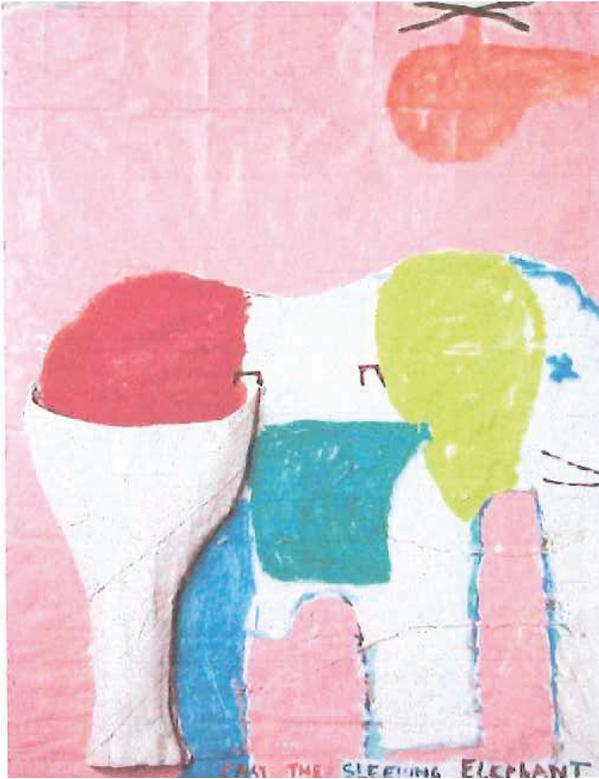


Lifetime Achievement: 90-year-old artist Mihail Simeonov's work to be exhibited in Pawtucket



Pawtucket's Arts and Culture Commission hosts a major exhibit of the work of 90-year-old internationally acclaimed artist Mihail Simeonov, running from September 19 through December 31. An opening reception to meet Mihail will be held at Pawtucket City Hall, Thursday, September 19 at 4:30pm, 137 Roosevelt Ave, Pawtucket.

Pawtucket Mayor Donald R. Grebien says, "As a city committed to art, design and innovation, we are delighted to be able to share the work of such an important artist. Bridging cultures, aesthetic worlds and ideas, Mihail's work is both visually stunning and deeply rooted in history. He is remarkable for his continued innovation and relevance in contemporary art."

Cast the Sleeping Elephant

Although the 90-year-old Pawtucket resident has been practicing his craft for more than 75 years, with major public monuments in Bulgaria and Tunisia, he is best known for his life-size bull elephant bronze sculpture at the United Nations (UN).

In 1980, after several years of planning and work on a breakthrough idea, Mihail traveled to Kenya, where, with the help of the country's Ministry of Wildlife, he took a cast of a live elephant bull in the wild. The elephant survived the 72-minute process completely unharmed. From that live cast, Mihail created the *Cast the Sleeping Elephant* bronze, an over-life size sculpture. The sculpture was officially inaugurated by Secretary General Kofi Annan and installed at the United Nation's headquarters in New York City in 1998, where it continues to serve as a symbol of man's dedication to preserving all living creatures.

Mihail says his bronze elephant is a symbol of the importance to protect all wildlife and it is aptly placed at the United Nations, the home of all nations.

Extraordinary Impact on Contemporary Art

According to Iana Simeonov, Mihail's daughter and a former art dealer and critic, the Pawtucket exhibition showcases several distinct but related bodies of Mihail's work in a range of media, including bronze, painting and drawing. The works illustrate how the artist continues to evolve artistically, elaborating on themes which have compelled and fascinated him since the 1960s.

"Mihail's 75 years as artist have not only been prolific, but extraordinary in terms of their contribution to the history and vitality of contemporary art," says Simeonov.

Mihail acknowledges that he has never had an exhibit at City Hall. "It's highly unusual," he says, admitting that he feels "grateful and happy."