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Image

Exclusive interview with Alois Mock,
Minister of Foreign Affairs in Austria

EUROPE AT THE CROSSROADS

United States

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE FDA

Psychiatrist Lars Weisæth

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

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TRAIL- BLAZER

FOR CHILDREN'S ART

Rafael Goldin
founded the
world's one and
only museum for
children's art in
1986.

An art museum
unlike any other
in the world is
just a few blocks
away from
Hafslund
Nycomed's
Corporate
Headquarters in
Oslo.

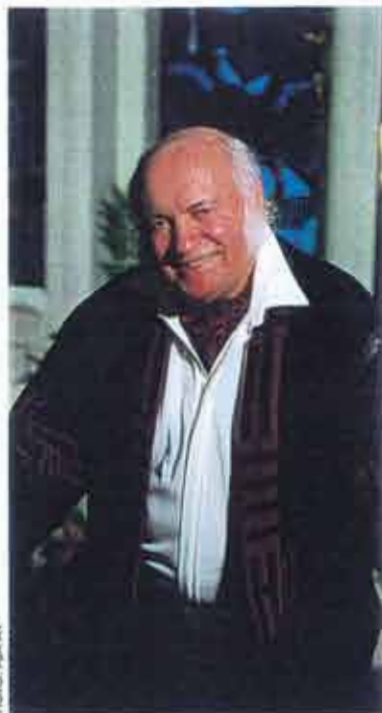


PHOTO: AIA AV



"Clown" in papier maché, made by a Mexican family.

Tucked away in a residential side street of Oslo is the only museum in the world devoted entirely to children's art. Museum founder Rafael Goldin and his wife, Alla, have collected works of art from children (ages 3 - 18) in over 150 countries. The tasteful villa with its intimate, Russian-inspired decor is filled floor to ceiling with paintings, sculptures, ceramics, collages, textiles and more. The museum attracts visitors from all over the world, and it has also gained recognition in art circles. Last year, the prestigious *Smithsonian* magazine devoted a 10-page spread, entitled "The Louvre of Children's Art in Oslo," to the International Museum of Children's Art.

Can children produce true art, even great art? Rafael Goldin's stunning collection is proof positive

that children not only can but do. The children's artwork has been selected on the basis of form, color, technique, composition and content—the same rigorous criteria by which all art museums judge their acquisitions. For Goldin, artistic quality was the first and indispensable requirement.

RESISTANCE

Goldin's desire to exhibit only the best of children's art met with resistance when he first proposed the idea in the mid-70s. Child psychologists objected to making value judgments about children's artistic endeavors; exhibiting the work of the exceptionally gifted would make children with ordinary abilities lose heart, they claimed. Adult artists protested that juvenile drawings could not qualify as true art.

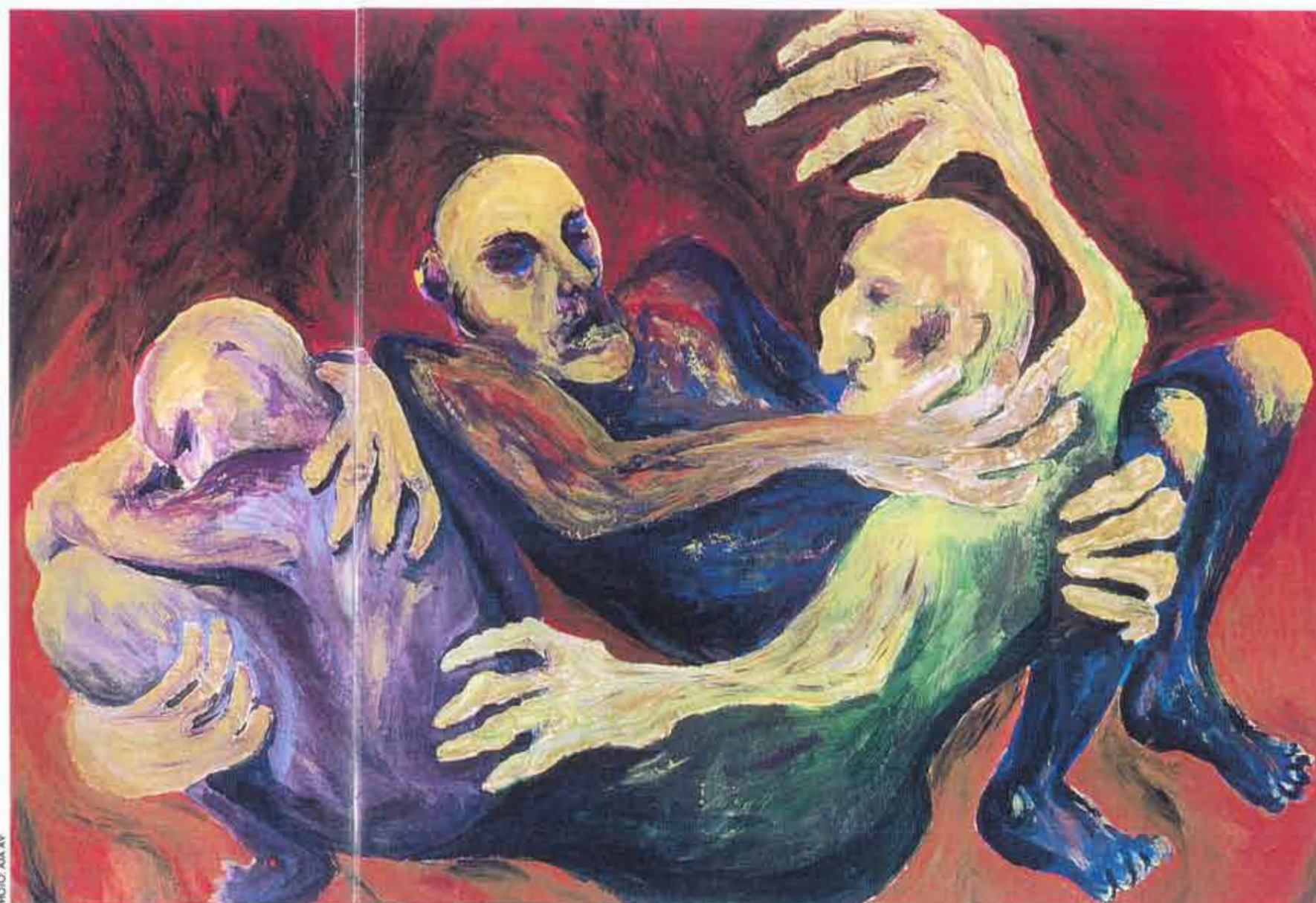


PHOTO: AIA AV

"The Day After",
Marco Polo
Pelossi, Peru,
age 14. From an
exhibition on the
theme of
catastrophes.



PHOTO: AIA AV

It took ten years of hard work before Goldin's dream of a children's art museum was realized. Today, most of the criticism has subsided. The children have proved what they are capable of. Adults find nothing juvenile about a painting like *Nevsky Prospect* (see reproduction, page 17) — but they may find it almost impossible to believe that it is the work of a 10-year-old, Ivan Rudiev from Russia. Children visiting the museum, rather than feeling deflated, are inspired by their peers' achievements. Child or adult, one leaves the museum convinced that artistic talent is not necessarily a function of age.

"We tend to underestimate children," Rafael Goldin believes. "We tell them that they can't really achieve anything until they're

"The Coup in
Moscow, August
1991", by Igor
Belusow, 14 (on
ladder), Diana
Lechter, 16, and
Anton Antonov,
13, who are
students at Michel
Bogay's art studio
in Moscow.

The doll collection at the museum for Children's Art.



adults. That's nonsense. Nor is it true that all children mature at the same pace. Some children are great artists at the age of five or six, others in their teens. Then the talent may disappear."

FILM DIRECTOR

Goldin, a Russian Jew, emigrated with his wife and seven-year-old son to Norway in 1973. He is a filmmaker by profession, having studied at the State motion picture academy in Moscow under the famous director, Sergei Eisenstein, who placed a heavy emphasis on esthetics and a thorough grounding in all of the arts.

"Norway was the land of my dreams in my youth," Goldin

remembers. He had learned about the country through its literature and music: Knut Hamsun, Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg. Another ideal was the Arctic explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen, whose relief work in Russia after World War I (for which he received the Nobel Peace Prize) made him a Russian folk hero.

A few years after the family moved to Norway, divorce and an ensuing custody battle tarnished Goldin's view of his dreamland. The visiting rights with his son, which Goldin had been awarded under Norwegian law, did not function in practice. People were sympathetic, but unable to help; and few seemed to realize how painful the separation

was for the child, no less than the father. "I realized that most adults have little knowledge about a child's inner world," Goldin recalls, "and that the father's role is terribly undervalued." He came to believe that his personal tragedy was also society's problem.

Goldin decided to address the problem, using the medium he knew best. He made a film about the father-child relationship, from the child's point of view. A book and an exhibit grew out of the film.

NEW DIMENSION

In gathering material for his film, Goldin visited schools all over Norway and asked the children to confide their thoughts about the



PHOTO: AIA AV

father-child relationship. Poems, stories and pictures poured in. Goldin was exhilarated and uplifted. With growing wonder, he realized that some of the children's art gave him the same intensity of artistic experience as adult art. More than that, it opened up a new dimension of experience, allowing him to see the world through the eyes of a child. Investigating further, he found that nowhere in the world was there a permanent exhibition of children's art. The idea of a museum was born.

A museum for children's art would benefit adults and children alike, Goldin reasoned. He was convinced that children not only have a need for creative expression, but also for creative stimulation and education. Knowledge of form and technique could only increase their creativity. A museum which adhered to standards of excellence would prove that young artists are taken seriously. That would give children self-confidence, which is important for their development later in life.

The needs of adults, however, figured just as prominently in Goldin's motivation. "Children's art is our path to our own childhood feelings," he says. "Children have a natural, innate common sense. Children are optimistic and believe in the good, in spite of the misery which many of them experience. If we cut the connection to our childhood, we lose our sense of relationship with nature and beauty. It is then that we are capable of waging war on each other, or destroying the environment."

FILM ABOUT MOTHERHOOD

A new film brought Goldin a step closer to his children's art museum. At a time when Norwegian women



PHOTO: AIA AV

were concerned about self-realization, Goldin conceived an idea for a film about mothers, as seen from the child's point of view. His idea dovetailed nicely with the film wishes of Herman Gmeiner, the Austrian founder of the international SOS Children's Villages. Gmeiner's organization is based on the premise that every child needs a mother, and it provides homes and schooling for refugees and orphans in a family-type setting. Gmeiner, as it turned out, was also interested in children's art. Art is used as therapy at the SOS villages. Gmeiner donated his large collection to Rafael Goldin and his new wife, Alla, a Russian physician.

FUNDING

Goldin's mother-and-father exhibits were shown in several countries, and people began to pay serious attention to children's art. Meanwhile, the Goldins' burgeoning collection soon overwhelmed their modest semi-detached house. The hunt was on for financial support in order to acquire suitable, permanent premises for exhibiting children's art.

Herman Gmeiner's generous donation of 100,000 dollars set them



PHOTO: AIA AV

on their way. Trusting that State support would be forthcoming sooner or later, Rafael and Alla took out a 300,000-dollar loan and bought the spacious Oslo villa which now houses the museum. About two-thirds of the museum's annual half-a-million-dollar budget is currently provided by State funds. And the 40,000-dollar Lego award in 1989 enabled the museum to expand into the attic storey.

Now, however, the museum is again bursting at the seams. Its founder hints that private enterprise might be a source of funds for expansion. "As a unique institution with an international reputation for quality, we should be an ideal choice for business sponsorship," Rafael Goldin says hopefully.



THE INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM FOR CHILDREN'S ART

The museum was established in 1986 by the Foundation of Children's History, Art and Culture, and is run by its founders, Rafael and Alla Goldin. Changing exhibits present the opinions and issues which children themselves feel are important, the works being selected according to strict quality standards. The museum houses works of art by children from over 150 countries.

Activity rooms for music, dance, drawing and painting, as well as a large collection of dolls, puppets and marionettes, are available to visitors. Films and videotapes on children's art are shown in the media room. For further information, contact: The International Museum for Children's Art, Lille Frøens vei 4, N-0369 Oslo, Norway. ■

"Two sisters," Sujata Seal, age 3, India.

"Chernobyl," Julia Adova, age 10, Russia.

"Nevsky Prospect," Ivan Rudiev, age 10, Russia.