

SCULPTURES MEMORIALIZE THE HOLOCAUST

One man chose to shine a light where some might have only seen the dark.

BY TANYA SCHWIED

HAL GOLDBERG IS a professional artist by any means and freely admits it. But he is someone who is passionate about his work and wanted his sculptures to make people think long and hard about the Holocaust. He chose to commemorate the heroism of that time and place rather than focus on the defeatist mentality that he saw in so much artwork around the world. These sculptures are dedicated to one of the most important lessons of the Holocaust—Am Yisroel Chai—the Jewish people will always survive.

I had the opportunity to speak with Hal to ask him how he got started in the art world, sculpture in particular, and he told me he had always worked in sculpture medium and for the last 40 years in marble and limestone particularly. “As I went around Holocaust museums all I would see is very ambiguous and abstract art that would focus on poor, sad Jews.” He hated the kinds of artwork that showed grieving, sad survivors and was hop-

ing to find more uplifting pieces. “Let’s not remember the sad only. There was a whole side that I wasn’t seeing represented: the Jews that fought back, non-Jews who helped the survivors, people who tracked down the killers after the war, the survivors’ strength and humanity.”

What inspires so many artists (professional or not) is seeing a gap and stepping up to fill it, which is exactly what Hal did with his own art. “As an artist I wanted to do something very different in terms of memorializing the Holocaust – this work is what came to me as my reaction. I wanted to shift people’s thinking and focus on what happened when people were in the camps trying to rebuild – many people like the Klarsfelds were heroes and decided to help their fellow human beings.” When I ask him about a favorite piece, if he can choose one, he said the Klarsfeld piece. Serge and Beate Klarsfeld are famous Nazi hunters based in Paris, and



“Anne Frank at the Wall in Jerusalem”

Marceline Kogan was a two-year-old child rounded up in the infamous Paris “Rafle” in 1942 and killed in Auschwitz. The sculpture depicts her emerging from Serge Klarsfeld’s book, “Jewish children deported from France.” It reminded me of a Phoenix rising from the ashes. It is clear from Hal’s work and the way he speaks about the Holocaust that he wants people to remember the heroism and strength, not only the devastation. ✧

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“Wallenberg”