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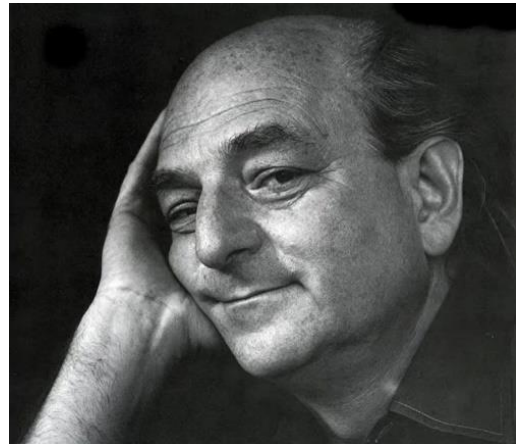
Robert Fishko, *Director*

SIDNEY GORDIN

(1918-1996)

Russian-born American

Born in Cheliabinsk, Russia, Sidney Gordin spent his first years in China, before immigrating to New York with his family in 1922. Strongly influenced by earlier examples of Constructivist art, Gordin produced works in a purely geometric idiom. Gordin's work shifted formally over the several decades of his practice, as he moved from creating sculptures out of wood and painted reliefs to bronze sculptures and collages. Later, Gordin's explorations of color and form led him to experiment in filmmaking, a subject he would later teach as a professor of art at the University of California at Berkeley.



Photograph from the Estate of Sidney Gordin
and Sullivan Goss Gallery

Gordin graduated from Cooper Union School of Art in New York in 1941. In 1951, he exhibited his first solo show at Bennington College in Vermont, as well as at Peter Cooper Gallery, Grace Borgenicht Gallery, and The New School. In a review of his first solo exhibition, art critic Alfred Frankenstein wrote in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "No one knows more about the visual meaning of the curve, the line, the twist, and the angle, and no one handles these resources more tellingly."

"Restricting yourself gives you an intensity of working," Gordin wrote of his own practice. Precision is at the center of his artmaking, which employs the use of dynamic constructions of lines made of paint or wire and ambiguously shaped blocks of wood. "Why did I restrict myself that way? I think I wanted to get to the essence of quality. I wanted everything to be perfectly proportioned, perfectly put together," he said.

Art critic Thomas Albright wrote in his 1985 book, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area: 1945-1980*, "Gordin shifted between painted wooden constructions that resembled miniature Mondrianesque architectures, with quirky Art Deco touches, and small organic abstractions in bronze that were like playfully acrobatic drawings in space."

After teaching at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn College, New School for Social Research, and Sarah Lawrence College, Gordin would eventually settle in the Bay Area of California, where he would exhibit frequently and served as professor in the Art Department at University of California, Berkeley for many years. In 1959, Gordin had his first solo exhibition at San Francisco's Dilexi Gallery, where he continued to exhibit until 1965.

Gordin presented solo shows at the M.H. De Young Memorial Museum and the Gallery Paule Anglim, both in San Francisco, CA, the Zabriskie Gallery in New York, NY, and the Newspace Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. His work was included in the group exhibition *West Coast Now*, 1968,

organized by the Portland Art Museum in Portland, OR, that also went onto the Seattle Art Museum in Seattle, WA, the M.H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco, CA, and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. Gordin was also part of the group exhibition *West Coast Artists* at the Cultural Center of the United States in Tel Aviv, Israel, as well as the exhibition *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area*, at the Oakland Museum in Oakland, CA, and in *16 California Artists* at the Galerie Sho in Tokyo, Japan. He was commissioned to make sculptures across the United States in Oklahoma, New York, and in California at the Symphony Hall in San Francisco.

Throughout his career, Gordin exhibited regularly at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art, all in New York, NY, and the Oakland Museum in Oakland, CA. Gordin was a member of American Abstract Artists and is represented in the collections of the Lowe Art Museum in Coral Gables, FL, the Oakland Museum of California in Oakland, CA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, CA, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Neuberger Museum of Art, both in New York, NY.

Gordin remained a professor at the University of California at Berkeley until his retirement in 1986. In 1993, he was elected a member of the National Academy of Design. He died in Berkeley, CA in 1996.