

Family Scrapbook

Artist Jonathan Goldman brings his installment/performance art piece to Baltimore.

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LOST — the word is printed in large, bold-faced letters across the top of a piece of plain white paper. Below it is a picture of a man smiling. In the first of three different fliers, he is dressed in the white sailor suit of a World War II Navy man; another shows a T-shirted, relaxed man at home; and in the last, he is in business attire. At the very bottom of the paper, there is an e-mail address.

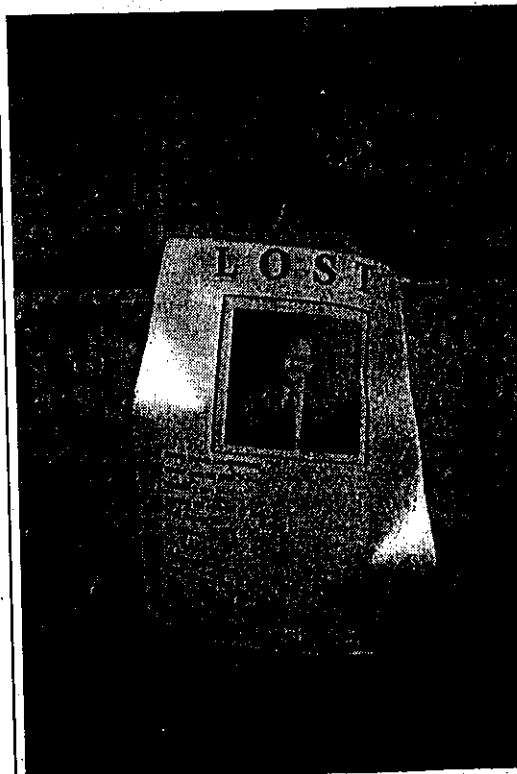
All three versions list below the picture these details:

Name: Marvin Lee Goldman, Born: June 28, 1920, Height: 5-10, Weight: 168, Hair: Brown, Eyes: Brown, Sex: Male, Occupation: Plumber, Place of Birth: Baltimore, Md.

Died: Jan. 29, 1978.

These pictures and details are almost all of what artist Jonathan Goldman knows about his grandfather. Mr. Goldman was 4 when his grandfather died. With this part installation, part performance art

Jonathan Goldman's artwork "Loss" involves the viewer in his "search" for his late grandfather.



piece titled "Loss," he is creating, in his own way, a memorial of this man he never knew.

Through this Sunday, Nov. 28, Mr. Goldman is installing the work here in Baltimore — handing out and posting on monuments, buildings and light posts the stark, simple fliers. He began the process in Druid Hill, where his grandfather was born, and continues in Ranchleigh, Charles Village and the Pikesville areas. Mr. Goldman is following a geographic pattern in and around Baltimore that traces the path of his grandfather's life.

The work may not fit into one's standard conception of an art exhibit. According to Mr. Goldman, a graduate of the Gilman School in Roland Park and Princeton University, art communicates an idea or emotion, and does it effectively. Although he began the concept as an exercise in his current studies toward a master's of fine arts from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, it has grown since his first installation of the piece around his home in Boston.

It is the interaction with those who see or are handed the fliers, and then the subsequent e-mails that follow, which become part of the performance aspect of the show. And Mr. Goldman anticipates that the piece will continue to evolve as he installs it in Baltimore, where his grandfather was born, lived and died.

The 25-year-old, Baltimore-born artist's motivation to create "Loss" is both personal and for artistic growth. His interest in public art — making art accessible to people who would not normally go to a museum — was largely due to the work of Shimon Attie. Seeing the German-born artist's works, which includes projecting pictures of pre-Holocaust Jews onto buildings that were synagogues before the war, got Mr. Goldman interested in creating that sort of public dialogue with his own work.

"Mr. Attie forever changed the

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space he used in the memories of the people who saw it," he said. "For example, they will never simply see the barbershop that the building now houses, they will always remember what he did."

The same concept is applied to "Loss."

"The piece is about loss, memory and recovery," said Mr. Goldman. "When people first see me post the flier, they think, 'Oh my gosh—they lost this man?' As they read on, I can see them working through the text. When they see that he has died — somehow they have to go through loss themselves — they relate what they see to loss in their own life."

Mr. Goldman's own sense of loss stems from the fact that his three living grand-

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parents are both geographically and emotionally dislocated from him. His parents, Owings Mills residents Brian and Eileen Goldman, over the years had relayed that his late grandfather was the one that had truly loved and taken a great interest in his grandson.

"I don't know which memories of [my grandfather] are real and what I have constructed for myself," Mr. Goldman reflected. "The few details I have give me the luxury of creating the grandparent I always wanted."

The concept of a memorial to his grandfather did not strike him fully until Mr. Goldman taped a flier to an already existing monument. He realized that the statue then took on a whole new meaning—that he had recontextualized its original purpose.

When Mr. Goldman told his grandmother, Marvin Goldman's widow who now lives in New Orleans, about the piece, he said she seemed very moved.

"Not because I was doing the art piece, but as a human being touched by loss," he explained.

One of Mr. Goldman's favorite e-mails he has received to date is from someone who saw the show in Boston. In it the viewer wrote, "I think I found this man you are looking for — I think it's you." □