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FIRST RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION IN 40 YEARS
HIGHLIGHTS THE PHENOMENAL CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF
RUBE GOLDBERG’S ARTWORK

On view October 12, 2018 through January 21, 2019

PHILADELPHIA—The National Museum of American Jewish History (NMAJH) is pleased to announce *The Art of Rube Goldberg*, an exhibition that celebrates the groundbreaking artwork of Rube Goldberg (1883-1970) – one of the most influential and prolific cartoon illustrators of the twentieth century who is best known for his whimsical invention drawing cartoons. Marking the first comprehensive retrospective exhibition of Rube Goldberg’s work since 1970, the exhibition chronicles all aspects of the artist’s seventy-two-year career, from his earliest published drawings and iconic inventions to his Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoons and beyond. *The Art of Rube Goldberg* will be on view at NMAJH on Historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia from October 12, 2018 through January 21, 2019. The Museum is offering free admission in honor of Election Day on Tuesday, November 6, 2018.

Bringing together never-before-exhibited original works of art, preparatory drawings, video, and related ephemera, *The Art of Rube Goldberg* offers visitors an unprecedented opportunity to witness the development of Goldberg's artwork and trace his rise to prominence as well as his lasting inspiration for generations of aspiring scientists and engineers and for inventors of all ages. It provides an intimate look into the life and legacy of one of the keenest and wittiest observers of modern times, whose name has entered the cultural lexicon and whose influence continues to reverberate into the twenty-first century.

Born in San Francisco and later graduating from the University of California Berkeley with a degree in engineering, it’s no surprise that Goldberg’s academic roots informed his crowning artistic achievement: his invention drawings. Featured prominently in the exhibition, this section explores how Goldberg’s zany contraptions caught the popular imagination and became—as he put it—“a symbol of man’s

capacity for exerting maximum effort to achieve minimal results,” highlighting their unique burlesque of our modern age of invention while making him a cultural icon.

The exhibition provides the opportunity to explore the scientific legacy of Rube’s work. In many ways Rube Goldberg could be considered the grandfather of STEM education; Rube blended Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math long before the acronym existed. Paired with his zany and fun invention drawings and political cartoons, Rube also pioneered STEAM, with “Art” playing a key role.

The Art of Rube Goldberg allows for NMAJH to offer different types of interactive learning one would not expect from a history museum. NMAJH will be hosting a Rube Goldberg Machine Contest (RGMC) for high school aged students. The contest requires students to build overly complicated and comically contrived inventions that complete a simple task. RGMCs teach creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking. Educational projects in which students have the opportunity to make something help students develop STEM skills by problem-solving. This year marks the 30th anniversary of RGMCs, which now include participants from more than a dozen countries in both online and live events. This is the first RGMC hosted in the Philadelphia area since 2015. Student groups of 5 or more can register for NMAJH’s contest at rubegoldberg.com. Registration opens in September and closes in November. Scholarships to cover the entrance fee are available.

While Goldberg never built the machines featured in his iconic invention drawings, visitors to the exhibition will experience an interactive “play” area of the exhibition. Visitors of all ages will be able to try existing simple machines as well as build their own Rube Goldberg machines of varying skill levels. *The Art of Rube Goldberg* aims to preserve Rube’s legacy as a leader in American innovation and humor, and inspire unconventional thinking for future generations.

The exhibition includes Goldberg’s innovative early work, with original drawings that reveal the beginnings of his comic style; then follows his steady rise to fame as a nationally syndicated presence in the 1920s and 1930s. Highlights include one of Goldberg’s earliest existing drawings, “The Old Violinist,” from 1895; an original concept drawing of Boob McNutt and Bertha from the 1920s; plus original artwork for such daily and weekly comic strip series as *Foolish Questions*, *Mike and Ike—They Look Alike*, and *Boob Mc-Nutt*, all from the 1910s and 1920s. The influence of vaudeville and early film on Goldberg’s comic imagination is explored, and his satirical takes on fashion, sports, politics, gender roles, and other aspects of modern life are showcased and celebrated. Rare family photographs and early films provide period detail and essential context.

The broad reach and popular appeal of Goldberg’s inventions is also featured through the presentation of film footage from the Goldberg scripted film, *Soup to Nuts*, from 1930 starring the Three Stooges, the classic self-operating napkin sequence from Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936), and from a rare interview of Goldberg by legendary broadcaster Edward R. Murrow. The popularity of Goldberg’s drawings and the artist himself is also explored through period examples of children’s toys, hobby kits and board games directly inspired by the invention drawings.

The exhibition concludes with a vivid survey of Goldberg’s output during his final decades and with a celebration of his lasting influence on popular culture. “The more I got to know him through his work, the more I understood how important it was not just to keep his legacy going but to reintroduce him to the world.” says Jennifer George, Rube Goldberg’s granddaughter. A selection of his late-in-life political cartoons traces the remarkable coda of his long career, while his enduring popularity is underscored by

such items as the 1995 Rube Goldberg U.S. Postage stamp.

The Art of Rube Goldberg was conceived by Creighton Michael; developed in cooperation with Heirs of Rube Goldberg, LLC, NY, NY; and curated by Max Weintraub. Tour organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

Major support for this exhibition is provided by Bank of America.

For high-res images and credit lines, please click [here](#).

The following links contain more information on Rube Goldberg's legacy and the competition.

Rube Goldberg Legacy

[Full Version](#)

[Short Clip](#)

Competition

[Full Version](#)

[Short Clip](#)

YOU'RE INVITED: Press Preview on Wednesday, October 10, 10am-12pm. Formal invitation attached.

A calendar listing of exhibition-related programming follows:

***The Art of Rube Goldberg* opens**

Friday, October 12

Pop Up with Jennifer George TBD

Sunday, October 28, time TBD

Members' Curator Tour

Thursday, November 8 at 11:00 AM

Members at all levels are invited to attend a private, curator-led tour of *The Art of Rube Goldberg* with Dr. Josh Perelman, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions and Interpretation.

Space is limited; RSVP to membership@nmajh.org or 215-923-3811 ext.106

Curated Cocktails: Rube Edition, presented by the Young Friends of NMAJH

Thursday, November 8 at 6:00 PM

Young Friends ages 21 to 40 are invited to explore *The Art of Rube Goldberg* in a relaxed, after-hours context. A NMAJH Curator will lead a brief talk. We'll provide the exclusive content, snacks, and beverages, and you provide the conversation.

Rube Goldberg Machine Contest

Sunday, December 9. More information to follow.

About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Wednesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. The Museum will also be open Tuesday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm during *The Art of Rube Goldberg*. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$13.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID; reduced prices available if purchased online. The Museum offers free admission in February. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit [NMAJH.org](#) or call 215.923.3811.

About International Arts & Artists

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a non-profit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs, and services to artists, arts institutions and the public. Visit www.artsandartists.org

The Rube Goldberg organization consists of two different companies: RGI (Rube Goldberg, Inc.), a 501(c)3 not-for-profit; and HRG (Heirs of Rube Goldberg), the for-profit arm. Both RGI and HRG work together to maximize the full potential of Rube Goldberg's life's work—a rich archive, 50,000 drawings deep—as a funding source to help endow its not-for-profit STEM and STEAM Education Initiatives.

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