

An abstract painting by Sam Feinstein, characterized by bold, expressive brushstrokes in a wide range of colors including yellow, green, blue, red, purple, and black. The composition is dense and layered, with visible textures from the paint application. In the lower-left quadrant, the artist's signature 'Feinstein' is visible in a reddish-brown hue.

# SAM FEINSTEIN THE EARLY YEARS

BARBARA CRAWFORD ART GALLERY  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2020–JANUARY 24, 2021  
AT SPRINGSIDE CHESTNUT HILL ACADEMY





Sam and Barbara

Samuel Lawrence  
Feinstein  
B. 1914 D. 2003  
Director of the Arts at  
Chesnut Hill Academy  
1938–1942

Barbara Anne Crawford  
B. 1914 D. 2003  
Director of the Arts at  
Chesnut Hill Academy  
1942–1990

## SPRINGSIDE CHESTNUT HILL ACADEMY

### *Sam Feinstein: The Early Years*

Barbara Crawford Art Gallery at SCH

in collaboration with

## WOODMERE ART MUSEUM

### *Group '55 and Midcentury Modernism in Philadelphia*

### *Sam Feinstein: Immersive Abstraction*

*(Highlighting the remainder of Sam's career)*

SEPTEMBER 26, 2020–JANUARY 24, 2021

Cover: *Untitled*, mid 1950s

Above: Photograph of Sam and Barbara in their Philadelphia apartment





*Self-Portrait, early 1930s*

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Detail, *Untitled*, c. 1949

## FOREWORD

If there is one constant that has united and inspired humanity throughout history and across cultures, it is art. As I have learned during my time at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (SCH), our talented arts faculty stand on the shoulders of the greats who preceded them, in particular Sam Feinstein and Barbara Crawford.

Our special exhibition, *Sam Feinstein: The Early Years*, is a companion to Woodmere Art Museum's *Group '55 and Midcentury Modernism in Philadelphia* and *Sam Feinstein: Immersive Abstraction*. Sam was our art director and taught at Chestnut Hill Academy (then the boys school) from 1938 to 1942, after which Barbara took over his post. Our show traces Sam's journey toward abstract expressionism through his watercolors, oil paintings, and illustrations from the 1930s through the mid-1950s, along with a film he made about Hans Hofmann, and a selection of works by Barbara.

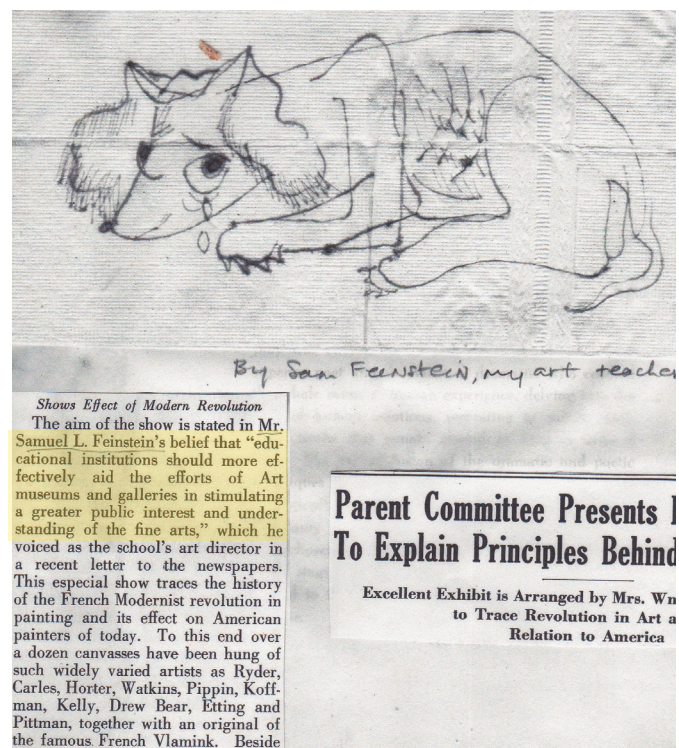


The journey that led to this exhibition began in the fall of 2018, when Patricia Stark Feinstein, Sam's widow and head of the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust, approached the school and generously offered to loan us a number of canvases. Tasked with selecting that work, our curatorial team set off to meet Pat in New York City, where she shared stories of Sam's career as an artist, his years teaching at our school, and his marriage to Barbara. On that fortuitous day, the Woodmere team was also present, and the idea for a joint exhibition was born.

After that meeting, the Feinstein Trust lent us three large, breathtaking canvases that currently adorn the walls of our McCausland Lower School. When one walks into the building's main entrance, *Starry Night* (1970s–80s) and *Opposing Elements* (1980s) capture the eye with their bright blues, reds, and yellows. Upstairs, in Doran Hall, one cannot help but be mesmerized by the explosion of colors and light coming from Sam's untitled painting of 1990–2002. Pat subsequently spent the day with our students and introduced them to these works, as well as some of Sam's earlier, figurative paintings. The students were energized by her stories about Sam and asked many perceptive questions, to which Pat responded with characteristic insight and grace.

When I became head of SCH, one of my first meetings was with Bill Valerio, Woodmere's director. That also happened to be the day that Germantown Avenue was closed so that Harry Bertoia's incredible sculpture, *Free Interpretation of Plant Forms*, could be moved onto Woodmere's grounds. It was at this meeting that I learned of the museum's mission: to tell the story of Philadelphia's art and artists. We too treasure and believe in furthering the arts in Chestnut Hill and are fortunate to partner with the museum for student visits and poetry slams. We extend our very special thanks to Bill and the entire Woodmere team for partnering with us on this important exhibition and catalogue.

*"Educational Institutions should more effectively aid the efforts of Art museums and galleries in stimulating a greater public interest and understanding of the fine arts."*  
~ Sam Feinstein





This exhibition would not be possible without the generous support and mentorship of Pat and the Feinstein Trust. Pat shared a wealth of information, archival photos, films, and research, and guided us in choosing work and related ephemera for the exhibition. We are grateful to the Chestnut Hill Academy and Springside School alumni who shared their stories about Sam and Barbara with us: John Wenzel '41, Theodore Clattenberg '59, Thorpe Feidt '59, Bonnie Warwick '61, Lewis Tanner Moore '71, and Binney Meigs '72. And we extend our thanks to Sascha Feinstein, who generously contributed an essay on his father for this catalogue.

Thank you as well to SCH's wonderful team: Ellen Fishman P'11, P'15, our director of the Arts and New Media Department, for spearheading this venture; Melissa Maddonni Haims P'21, parent volunteer and our amazing curator; and my wife, Pia Druggan P'17, art historian and assistant curator for this show.

Stephen Druggan, Ed.D.

*Head of School*

*Springside Chestnut Hill Academy*



Pat Feinstein in front of *Starry Night*, teaching at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy in the fall of 2019. To the left, *Opposing Elements*.





*Immigrants*, c. 1930

## SAM FEINSTEIN: THE EARLY YEARS 1920S–1950S

Samuel L. Feinstein, accompanied by his parents and extended family, sailed into New York City Harbor on April 19, 1922. It took two long years for them to flee religious persecution during the Russian Revolution. They journeyed from Romania to England where they boarded the RMS *Olympic* to cross the Atlantic. Their voyage was riddled with peril and hardship, which Sam would never forget.

The family moved to Philadelphia and eventually settled in what was then a very poor area of the city, near Pine and Fourth Streets. Sam was eight when he started 1st grade. A year or two later, he began helping his father with the financial details of his fruit-market business. His religious education consisted of completing his studies of the Torah and becoming a Bar Mitzvah, but for him the path to his lifelong spiritual growth was his strong commitment to, and love of, art.

*"For me, painting has become a stubborn necessity, a reason for existing."* ~ Sam Feinstein

Sam benefited from his high school years at Philadelphia's very prestigious Boys Central High School, which offered a rich curriculum in languages, history, literature, poetry, music, art, and drama, taught by extraordinary scholars seeking employment during the Depression. Sam was popular and well-known for his artistic abilities, his realistic style, and his sharp eye for detail.



In 1932 Sam graduated at the top of his class from Boys Central High School and, to the dismay of his parents, declined a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania, accepting instead an art scholarship at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, now known as The University of the Arts.



*Little Red Riding Hood, c. 1934*

At the Museum School, drawing techniques were of primary importance and emphasized structure. However, Sam had a keen, sensitive eye for color as seen in his 1940s illustrations of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Rip van Winkle*, and *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp*. It was during his second year at university, while painting the massive jagged cliffs and vast ocean on the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec, that he realized that the traditional academic realism he was taught was not doing justice to the power he was experiencing from nature. and he started making distortions without really knowing why.

*"What are nature's laws? How specifically, do they operate?" ~ Sam Feinstein*

This marked the beginning of a shift in his style, which came with pushback from his educators. This shift is evident in his watercolor scenes, such as *Market AM* and *Factories* (p. 25), where the forms of the buildings soften by his use of color that flows in and out of one another while still keeping the crispness of some tiny details.

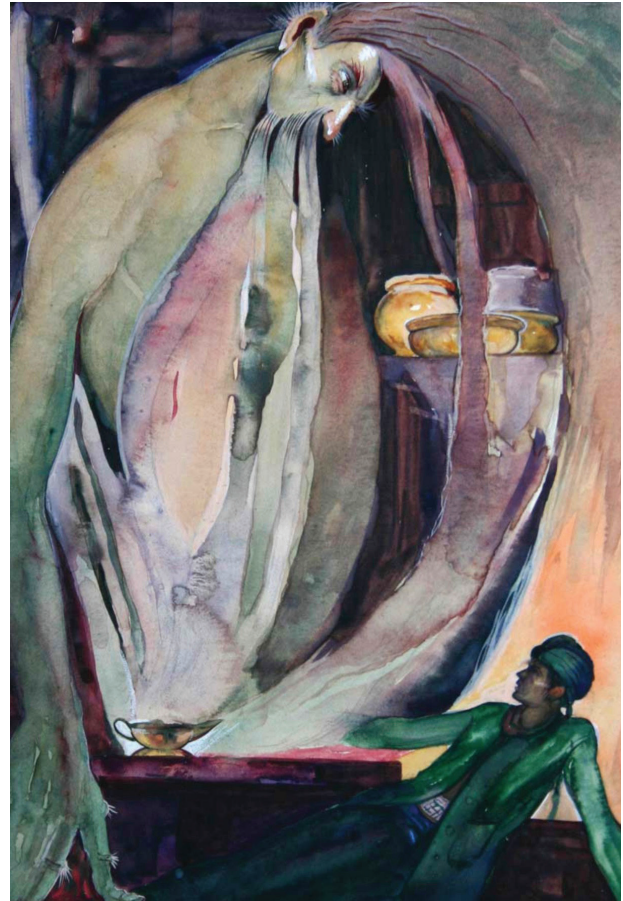


*Market AM, c. 1930*



Sam's exceptional talent and skill won him many awards, including the prize for painting in his final year. At the age of 20, urged by his teacher and mentor Franklin Watkins, he submitted two portraits for the Philadelphia Sketch Club's 72nd Annual Exhibition and won the Medal of Honor for his *Portrait of Mrs. W.* Following his graduation with honors in 1936, Sam was given his first one-man show at the Philadelphia Art Alliance.

After graduation, Sam struggled to support himself as a teacher and commercial artist. He taught painting at the Museum School and printmaking at the Philadelphia Print Club. In 1938 Sam became the head of the Art Department at Chestnut Hill Academy (CHA), the boys' school of what is now Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (SCH). His reputation was that of an innovative and insightful teacher.



*Aladdin and His Magic Lamp*, c. 1934

"I am definitely opposed to combatant services. This belief is based upon deep convictions growing out of my study and practice of art, with its fundamental philosophy of beauty, construction and order, as against any form of destruction, especially that of man by man."

~ Sam Feinstein

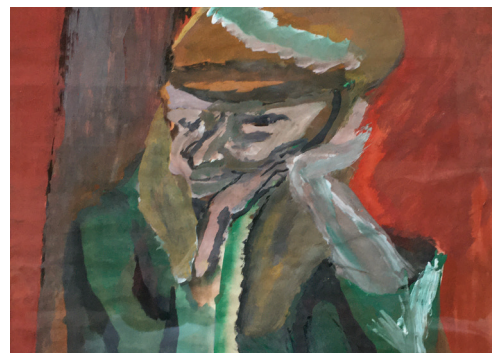
The following is written because of some doubt as to whether the statements in series X (conscientious objection to war) define my status.

I am definitely opposed to combatant service.

This belief is based upon deep convictions growing out of my study and practice of art, with its fundamental philosophy of beauty, construction and order, as against any form of destruction, especially that of man by man.

These principles have become a living force in my personal outlook, their influence being fully as powerful as the religious edict taught me by my father and grandfather, "Thou shalt not kill."

Sam's application for conscientious objector status



Detail, *Worry*, 1940



*Terror*, c. 1942



Detail of *Rest in Pieces*, 1945



*Loading Ambulance*, 1943

In 1942 Sam enlisted in the army and married Barbara Anne Crawford, whom he had met at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art. Crawford eventually took over his teaching and leadership post at CHA where she remained for nearly 50 years. Barbara was married to Sam for almost two decades, and the two remained friends and painted together for the rest of their lives. His style by then was distinctly expressionistic and conveyed a sense of anxiety and fear as the threat of war became imminent. This is depicted in his work, *Terror*, where a man is seen screaming in horror.

Sam struggled with the idea of war and applied for conscientious objector status. His request was denied and Sam went on to secure a position in the 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion by studying all he could find about camouflage, as well as staging a camouflage exhibit at the Franklin Institute. The lack of creativity involved with this type of work was frustrating him, so he convinced the army that he was better suited for pictorial work, such as creating posters and animations. He was then moved to the Pictorial Services Division in the Medical Field Services School where he created a series of posters. His illustrations were dramatic; he played with scale and exaggerated perspective to intensify his message, as seen in *Loading Ambulance*. In 1944 he won first place in an army poster contest and *Rest in Pieces* (p. 4) became the front cover of the V-E Day edition of *The Medical Soldier* newspaper. In 1945 Sam was honorably discharged from the army and for one year taught art history at Springside School, the sister school to CHA.

Sam's challenge in the 1940s was finding time to paint because he also needed to earn a living. After his discharge from the army he began working for the documentary film company, Philip Ragan Associates, Inc., and it was in the late 40s that he created the short documentary *One World or None*,





*Harbor, 1947*

commissioned by the United Nations, about the splitting of the atom and demonstrating the destructive force of atomic missiles. Sam researched University of Pennsylvania notes and archives to get the information to make the film. The documentary became a classic, and it is still shown by educators today.

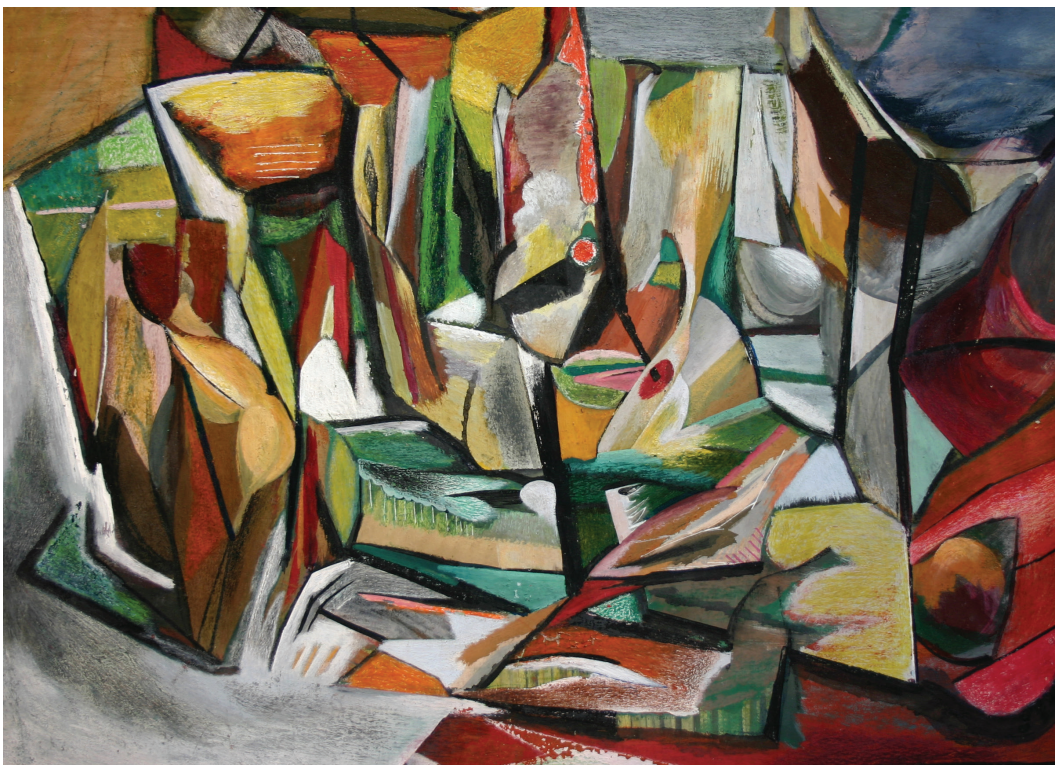
In 1947 Sam went on to teach at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and became known in the region for his paintings, writings, and lectures. E.M. Benson, Sam's supervisor, asked him to make a movie about his former mentor, Franklin Watkins. There was no script so Sam had to compose the narrative, direct, and film the movie.

Sam moved to New York in the fall of 1947 in order to make a living and pursue his true love, painting. In his first two years he was an art director for the graphics houses Murphy-Lillis, Inc. and Frederic House, Inc., then went to work for Caravel Films. During the late 1940s and early '50s Sam found joy in the time he spent in Provincetown, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, where he immersed himself in painting in a place where Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, John Marin, Stuart Davis, and Hans Hofmann also created work. His search for abstraction is evident in *Harbor*, *Still Life*, and *Untitled*, c. 1949, where geometric abstraction is influenced by Picasso's synthetic cubism.



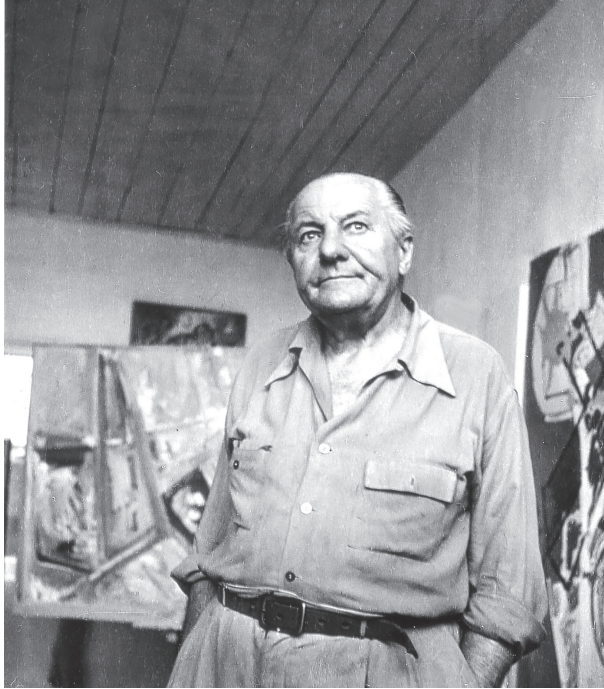


*Still Life*, late 1940s



*Untitled*, c. 1949





Hans Hofmann in his studio in 1951, photographed by Sam.



*Untitled, 1952*

Sam was re-energized when he met and began studying with Hans Hofmann in 1949 and decided to become a full-time freelance artist. Hofmann, born in 1880 in Germany, had studied art in Paris and had met Matisse, Picasso, Braque, and Robert Delauney. He brought firsthand knowledge of Fauvism and Cubism styles already established in Europe, and became known in America as the art teacher of the 20th century. Sam's interest in the abstract form evolved through Hofmann's teachings. In Hofmann's class, Sam's drawings became far more geometric than his previous works. Paintings that were inspired by a live model, like *Untitled, 1952*, with angled shards and lush surfaces of paint, merely suggested the presence of a figure as Sam continued to explore the relationship between geometry and art.

In 1950 Sam began work on a black-and-white documentary film about Hofmann, his teachings, his creative process, and his daily life. The film took him decades to complete. Sam captured the intense vitality of the artist as he immersed himself in the act of painting *The Window, 1950*. He clearly explains Hofmann's artistic philosophy and how the artist saw energy and movement in the forms he was creating. This work was acquired and then donated by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Neuberger to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1951. In 1964 Hofmann approved Sam's script and was very pleased. *Hans Hofmann*, considered a classic art film of the 1950s, finally premiered to a full audience at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on October 8, 1999, 33 years after Hofmann's death. During these years, the two artists became friends, sharing a common passion for the philosophical pursuit of art and developing a deep respect for one another. The two spent time listening to music, talking, going to parties, and sharing family picnics on the beach. They painted together in Provincetown and New York, and Hofmann



Detail of *Untitled*, c. 1952 found on the back cover

offered Sam a teaching post at Hofmann's school in Provincetown, which Sam declined to accept because of an already full schedule.

It was in the early 1950s that Sam won honors for two of his woodblock prints, *Black Walnuts* and *Wharf's End*, which were later acquired by the Philadelphia Art Museum. During this same time, Sam helped Hofmann craft the precise language for his essay, "The Color Problem in Pure Painting: Its Creative Origin." Sam was the one who could truly decipher Hofmann's meaning and could clearly communicate what the master was trying to say. In 1954 Hofmann dedicated his final draft to Sam.

Influenced by Hofmann as well as other painters, Sam continued exploring abstract forms, complexity, and moods of color with swirling forms or straight-edge shapes as seen in *Untitled*, c. 1952. He would start painting with no preconceived idea of what would happen on the canvas, adding paint and growing with the work, reconnecting with the laws of nature and light, giving the painting energy.

*"Painting deals essentially with light in order to produce form that can move the spectator."* - Sam Feinstein

A painting could be soft or bold like music, each piece of color a note; and music in turn, was like a painting. With a constant thirst for knowledge and answers to his existential question of what art is, Sam and his friend, architect Louis Kahn, formed Group 55. This collection of Philadelphia-based artists organized panel discussions on contemporary creative problems. Sam was the president of the group during the three years they were together.



*"There is no difference between an abstract picture and a realistic one...everything is, in the end, energy...movement...any form that you're looking at is made up of electrons...energy."* - Sam Feinstein

Feinstein continued to teach until his passing in 2003, his style evolving to what he and Hofmann called "plasticity"—the invisible thrust of energy that propels life—producing later works such as *Rising* (p. 21 and 27). He encouraged his students to create what he called "a wild one" as described by Bonnie Warwick in her recollection of Sam (p. 15)

Pia Druggan, P '17



*Untitled, mid 1950s*

The above text was inspired by Patricia Stark Feinstein's book, *Sam Feinstein*, Fields Publishing, 2008. The Sam Feinstein quotes have been taken directly from the book. All images are courtesy of the Samuel L. Feinstein Trust.



## Works by Barbara Crawford

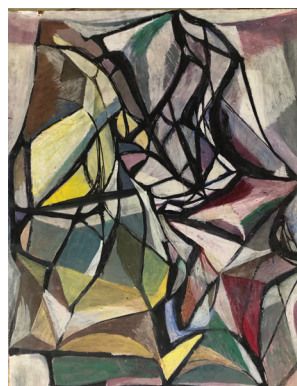
In the SCH exhibition, *Sam Feinstein: The Early Years*, we have included several Barbara Crawford paintings to show how her style was influenced throughout her life by Sam Feinstein.



*Market*, 1930



*Sleeping Beauty*, 1935



*Waterfall*, 1949–1950



*Gold Abstract 1*, 1952



*Abstract 3*, 1972

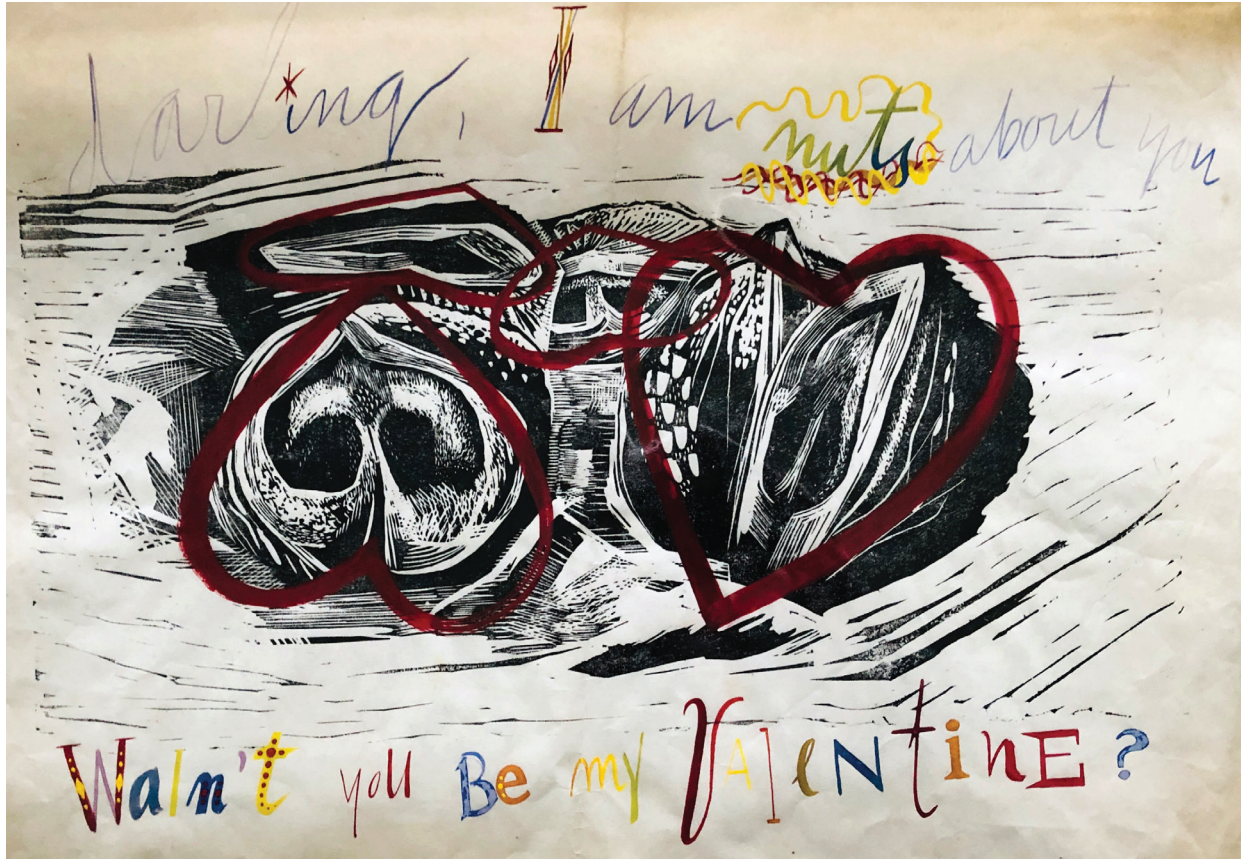


*Abstract 2*, 1957



*Detail, Untitled*, c. 1950s





"Darling, I am nuts about you. Waln't you be my Valentine?" Sam used a print of his Black Walnuts to dedicate this loving note to Barbara Crawford. The original woodblock print is at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It won Honors in the 1950 and 1952 *Philadelphia Printmaker's Annual*.

## RECOLLECTIONS FROM STUDENTS OF SAM FEINSTEIN AND BARBARA CRAWFORD

In preparation for this exhibition, SCH reached out to Barbara Crawford's former Chestnut Hill Academy and Springside School students to ask what they remembered about their time in her class. Barbara introduced John Wenzel, Theodore Clattenberg, Thorpe Feidt, Bonnie Warwick, Lewis Tanner Moore, and Binney Meigs to Sam Feinstein, and these students went on to paint and study under him for many more years. Barbara Crawford taught grades 1–12 in the basement of the Wissahickon Inn. The above students in their last years of high school called themselves the "Cellar Rats," as they hung out whenever they could in Barbara's art room. Here is what they share years later.



## John Wenzel, Class of '41

According to Wenzel, before the war at CHA, you had traditional teachers and then you had a few good teachers, like Sam. He was progressive, engaging, and interacted with his students beyond the classroom walls. All of John's senior class that year ended up going to war, and it was in the late 40s, early 50s that John and Sam ran into each other on the streets near Sam's studio in Philadelphia. When John asked Sam what he was doing, Sam told him he was working on a new style, a new outlook, and that he would quit being a painter if he had to use the *white on white* or *black on black* style of the times. A few years later, John took a class at the Hans Hofmann School in Provincetown where Sam was working as Hofmann's assistant teacher.

John shared how popular Sam had become. "Sam was studying with Hans Hofmann and some of the great abstract expressionist artists. He was part of the Hans Hofmann group; it was a big part of his life." John remembers also meeting up with Sam in his studio on the Upper West Side in New York saying, "It was fun to watch Sam operate."

*John Wenzel lives in New York City. He painted until the age of 86.*

## Theodore Clattenberg, Class of '59

Theodore Clattenberg shares how, as an attorney in Philadelphia, he went weekly to Sam's studio on Chancellor Street to paint with Sam as a way to escape the pressures of the world of law. Barbara, who lived above the studio, was present almost every week.

Theodore describes the space jokingly as a "spiritual gymnasium," where you were free to explore the nonverbal world by creating organized forms and shapes on the canvas. Surrounded by a great group of students, each working on their own, he was able to connect, at a spiritual level, through the creation of art. Sam started class by sharing an article or looking at forms in a photo. He then invited his students to start painting by "covering the white," letting everything go, not planning, getting away



Barbara and Sam

from the conscious level of thinking and reconnecting with the spirit inside. Only after this could one figure out where things went, making sure that the forms were consistent, that a triangle on its own did not appear with the curved forms. To Sam, color was the building block, the most important thing in a painting. It did not matter if you were painting a still life or an abstract piece, a sunny day or a rainy day, the principles of using color were the same. It was color that had the power to bring luminosity to a painting. Sam encouraged students to comment on each other's work. Paintings ranged from still lifes to abstracts. When the students left, Sam was known to reuse the leftover paint and dash it on his own canvases, building up his boards.



Theodore remembers Barbara as a nurturing and caring person. She was his teacher at CHA from grades 1 through 12. In his early years, he remembers using crayons to make simple forms, creating abstract cartoons. In his last years in high school, as part of a group calling themselves the “Cellar Rats,” he and his friends escaped during their free periods or after school to Barbara’s art sanctuary in the basement of the Wissahickon Inn where they talked to her about writing and music. It was for these young adults a stimulating place to be—an “oasis in your life,” says Theodore.

*Theodore Clattenberg has continued to paint and recently exhibited his paintings at the Springside Chestnut Hill Alumni Art Show 2019.*

## Thorpe Feidt, Class of '59

“I studied with Barbara Crawford at CHA straight through my senior year. After that, I studied for years privately with Sam Feinstein. I’m indebted to Barbara and Sam far more than I can say; indeed, I cannot imagine my life without the instruction and sympathetic care they gave me. They taught me not only techniques but also—and most importantly—a creative attitude, without which nothing of value can be accomplished. Blessings on both of you, Barbara and Sam!”

*Now retired, Thorpe Feidt received an MFA from the Pratt Institute where he later taught until 1971. Subsequently, he taught at Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, MA.*



*Boats, 1947 by Barbara Crawford*

## Bonnie Warwick, Class of '61

*On Barbara Crawford:*

When I think of Barbara, I see her first in her house on Chancellor street, laughing with all of us younger friends, sometimes with her head thrown back and her hand on her throat. I hear her humming along with the jazz she always played—her favorite was “Satin Doll.” I hear her extolling Kenneth Patchen’s writing or rolling her eyes in mock horror at some escapade we had gotten into.

I got to know Barbara when I was in 11th grade at Springside and attended the Summer in the Arts program she ran with Hank Putsch in the gym of the former location of Springside School on Norwood Avenue. I remember sitting in the sun in the doorway, eating sandwiches, talking nonsense, and laughing with Thorpe Feidt and Barbara, Dickie Broadhead, and Herbie Muschamp. Barbara was the best audience a kid could have, always responsive, always encouraging.

When I was sent home from college (for stupid misbehavior), Barbara was instrumental in arranging for me to be an aide to the junior school teachers. The next year I went to art school in Boston, but at the end of one year, I returned home, once again at loose ends. It was at this point that Barbara somehow pulled strings to have me hired as her assistant, to teach art to the little kids in the big sunny room adjoining hers in the cellar.



I didn't realize at the time how much I learned about teaching from Barbara; I was just having fun. Barbara believed (as Sam did, and I do) that being creative was as basic a drive as eating, that everyone was or could be an artist. As she saw it, her job was to make a place where kids could enjoy themselves finding out what they wanted to make and how to make it. In her sunny room, which looked out on the Kindergarten playground, she played music, and drank tea, and laughed and chatted while everyone worked; she made it all seem easy and pleasant. She had projects, of course, and, when it came up, she talked about the elements of art—color, gesture, volume, and so on—but mainly she was being a great audience, paying attention to each kid's needs, and encouraging them. She was hostess to the kids who needed and/or wanted a safe place to hang out at school; these were the "Cellar Rats," and proud to be such.

I had an apartment on 18th street in town, a few blocks from Chancellor Street, and commuted on the train with Barbara most days. She loved walking across the fields from St. Martin's station. Very often, she cooked suppers, not just for me but for a lot of us younger people, one of whom was a great piano player, and we would make up and perform ridiculous operas. Barbara also hosted the monthly meetings of the Jungian Analytical Society of Philadelphia, and so I got to hear marvelous lectures and discussions on fairy tales and archetypes and such, and I got to meet some of her friends, such as the architects Louis Kahn and Ann Tyng, and the philosopher Lancelot Law White. The most important person she introduced me to was, of course, her ex-husband Sam, who would become my painting teacher, mentor, and friend.

Between them, they gave me the life I have lived ever since. And I am only one of many who count Barbara as a mother I took too much for granted and to whom I am forever grateful.

#### *On Sam Feinstein:*

Much has been written about Sam and what a great painter and teacher he was, but when I think back on my years with him, and see his face, I think first of his charm. Sam had many flaws, like all human beings do, but he was warm and caring about people in general, and sensitive to what they needed.

Barbara had me come in to one of Sam's classes on Chancellor Street in early 1963. I arrived at the cellar and Sam greeted me, looked me in the eye, smiled, and kissed me on both cheeks. Coming from what was then a WASP ghetto, where, (no matter how much they loved you), no one ever touched each other or said "I love you," I was amazed, though of course I didn't let it show.

I started painting in my usual rather tight, timid way. Sam came over, gently took away my brushes, and told me simply to cover as many papers or canvasses as I had, with my hands or with a rag. I did so, and it felt good. He continued to have me do this for months, encouraging me, chatting and joking with me, but saying very little about my work. Only slowly did he begin to talk to me about what I was actually painting. Eventually, he told me I had been so over-charged it was clear I needed to just let go and throw the paint around for awhile until I was calm enough to actually make a painting.

This was Sam. He saw very quickly what his various students needed, how much and how fast they could be pushed, and what kind of tone would work with them. With some he was very gentle, with





Sam used everyday junk to create his still life. Photo courtesy of Sascha Feinstein.

others more teasing or challenging. He was very intuitive; he had good instincts about people as well as about painting.

In Philadelphia and New York, we painted in the cellar; in Dennis, Massachusetts, in the barn that was as dark and full of junk as the cellars. Sam was king of the pack rats; he saw possibilities in every piece of wood or metal or other piece of trash, and felt the need to save them for some great project. It drove his wives crazy, and yet some of the things we made with trash were exquisitely beautiful: the candelabra made from a wrought iron chair at Chancellor Street, the stairwell made from tree branches on 90th street, for example. But the studios were full of junk; you squeezed in to whatever place you could find and looked at whatever still life Sam had created out of torn pieces of paper, broken crockery, chipped plaster busts, driftwood, torn metal, whatever. If you were really looking, you could see the rhythms of color and form without being distracted by what the objects were.

However, before you worked on your still life, if that is what you wanted to do, you were supposed to do a few "wild ones." To stretch, to relax, to see what was up with yourself. Always, the wild ones.

While you worked, Sam might read to you, from the newspaper or from books. (I remember he read the whole of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* to the Philadelphia class.) Or he might talk about painters, or he might just chat and banter. Towards the end, we would have a "line-up." One at a time, we would put up our paintings, and he would talk about them, always encouraging the newer and shyer students, always pushing the old timers. He would talk about "in-betweens"—colors that linked the various parts of the whole—or about "tonality vs. hues" or effects made from dark vs. light as opposed to better effects made from the actual hue of a color. He would talk about how a painting had to

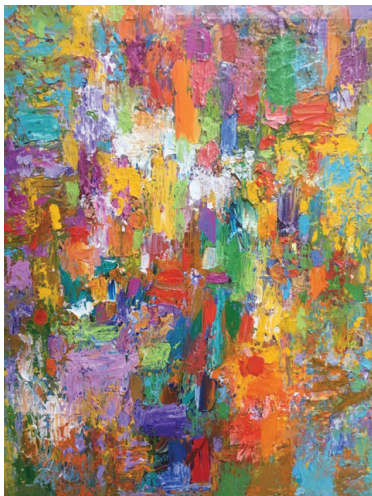


present itself as a whole, like a tree does, or a person. It had to breathe, it had to be radiant and alive. Subject did not matter; in fact, it often got in the way, since viewers would bring their past associations and therefore miss what was being presented to them in the moment.

Sam was priest-like in his seriousness about creation, but at the same time, those of us who knew him well would give him a hard time just for the fun of it. Line-ups were never without yelps of pain and screams of laughter. We would tease him and imitate him because he allowed it, because he knew how much we loved him.

*For Bonnie, painting is a way of life and keeps her going. Sam taught her that it is the process that matters, not the product. Sometimes in the winter, when it is too cold to leave the kitchen, Bonnie switches from painting to making collages, but she always spends her days making something. Especially now, when the news is generally bad or frightening, Art Saves! It always has, it always will.*

## Lewis Tanner Moore, Class of '71



*Untitled, 1990 by Barbara Crawford (Private Collection of Lewis Tanner Moore)*

Barbara Crawford lived a life marked by generosity, informed by empathy, and filled with artistic exploration. Hers was a life of the mind, or more accurately, the spirit. She provided for me and for many others a gateway to a world where creativity and ideas were the real currency. She was quietly committed to investigating expression through her art and examining the sources of that creative impulse, the mind, and what C.G. Jung called the collective unconscious and archetypes. Her commitment was not to what is generally known as the “art world” of galleries, self-promotion, and exhibitions. She was drawn to the process of turning pigment into form. She was a maker, and what she was seeking was more elusive. On rare occasions, it existed in the space between the artist and the canvas.

By the mid-1960s, when I met her, she was well settled into a routine that allowed her to wear many hats. She was the driving force for the C.G. Jung Center of Philadelphia, creating a space where Jung’s ideas and theories could be explored and inviting guest speakers to address the forum. At her home/studio, she hosted weekly painting classes taught by her former husband and fellow artist Sam Feinstein. She was painting; exploring color, line, and form; finding new ways to render her essence onto the canvas. She was also writing plays as yet another output for her need to express herself. For her, it was a need that was always simmering, about to boil over.

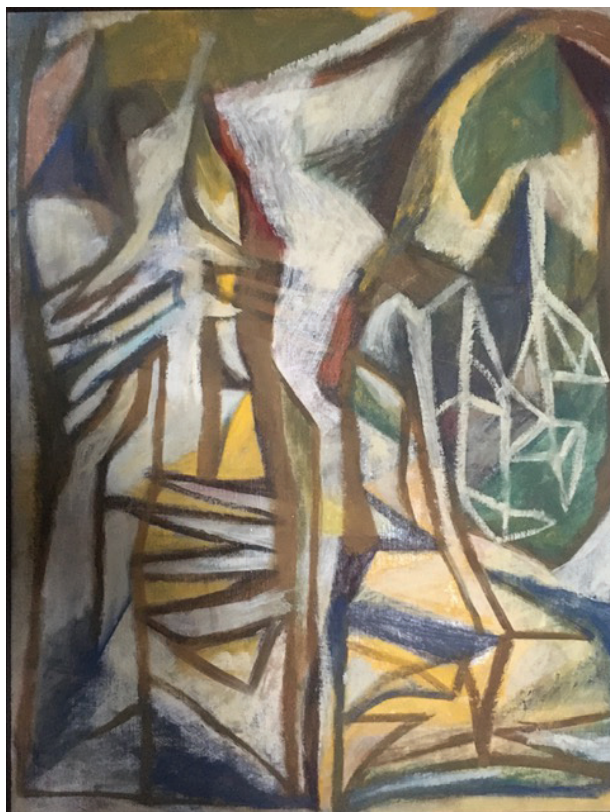
She was the head of the Art Department at Chestnut Hill Academy. Her role as a teacher was built on her mastery of her craft. It was enhanced by her knack for supporting those students who, one way or another, did not fit in. Those lost boys were referred to as the cellar rats. I first encountered her as an art teacher in the basement classrooms that were her domain. She gradually became a protector and a mentor for me during much of my time at Chestnut Hill Academy, a place where I generally felt like an unwelcome guest. She introduced me to a world of sounds, ideas, and possibili-



*They Amuse Themselves-They Do Not Sing, They Do Not Dance, 1939, print by Barbara Crawford (Private Collection of Lewis Tanner Moore)*

ties that continues to enrich my life more than half a century later.

Over the years, the depth of her talent and the scope and range of her work as an artist has continued to reveal itself slowly. Her work has largely been hidden from view. She was a painter, a printmaker, and an illustrator. I recently learned that as early as 1952, she had a piece collected



*Untitled Forest, ND, by Barbara Crawford (Private Collection of Lewis Tanner Moore)*

by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The trove of work she left includes a lifetime of compositions that built the foundation for the rich nuanced abstractions she crafted. These later works have a quiet energy that reveals where her search had taken her. On her way, she created a body of work that can be considered a primer of 20th century art. The 1939 print, *They Amuse Themselves-They Do Not Sing, They Do Not Dance*, pictured above left, reveals not only her skill, but it also shows us something of her approach to the world. She did not work in order to seek the spotlight of the marketplace or critical approval. She painted because, at her core, she was a painter.

## Binney Meigs, Class of '72

Attending Chestnut Hill Academy from Kindergarten through 12th grade and studying art with Barbara Crawford starting in about 3rd grade, Binney came to appreciate the significance of Barbara's pedagogy slowly. He found himself drawn to the art room because the music was good and the



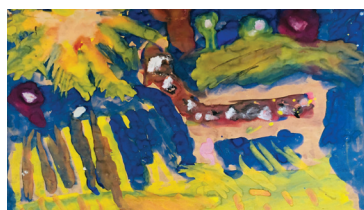


Barbara Crawford on the left with her students, CHA Archives, 1990s

## Art Work by Former CHA Students of Sam Feinstein



*Lady with Sunglasses*  
Isaac H. Clothier, IV '49  
Age 7



*Bambi Felt the Sun  
on his Back*  
Teddy Ruegg '51  
Age 6



*Mother Bringing  
Food to her Nest*  
Davenport Plumer  
c. '50  
Age 7

students were permitted to talk if they were quiet. By about 9th grade, Barbara permitted Binney to use the school's only potter's wheel, then damaged and abandoned. Having studied the basics at a summer craft school, she asked Binney to teach interested students clamoring to "try" the wheel. It was then that Binney and Barbara began a lasting friendship.

One day, Barbara insisted that Binney get off the wheel and try painting. Reluctant at first, he struggled with his first still life, attempting to somehow duplicate nature's radiance. Though crude, the effort was deemed a success. Before long, an "extra" class developed among other interested students, which Barbara then delegated to Steve Rawls, a former graduate who swiftly added English literature to his graphic teaching. A universe of possibility began to emerge for Binney. Barbara lost no time announcing the fundamentals of her artistic philosophy: The limitless creative capacities of all humanity are never defined by talent alone. Hard work in the observation of nature in balance with intuitive release was the key. Realism and abstraction uttered their power through the same graphic necessities of spacial dynamism. Perceived lack of ability and self-criticism took a back seat, providing no excuse for inaction. Barbara was teaching what she had learned from her ex-husband, Sam Feinstein, who had absorbed it from abstract colorist painter Hans Hofmann. When the "extra class" was deemed sufficiently seasoned, Barbara announced it would be held in Feinstein's studio, part of the carriage house the divorced couple shared off Rittenhouse Square. Barbara's long interest in Jungian symbolism and dream analyses seamlessly entered the curriculum.

The Feinstein studio and Crawford living quarters presented an enchanted world of found and home-made furniture, hand-crafted lighting fixtures, woodwork executed by either Sam or Barbara in serendipitous abandon. The downstairs studio was a wonderland of found objects collected from the surrounding streets on trash days, piled high into disjointed, garish protrusions awaiting still life study by Sam's students. As in Barbara's classes at school, Sam's students were encouraged to both abandon themselves to their instincts while simultaneously taking stock of the pictures' natural demands toward wholeness of form. Using the still life as nature's example, Sam strove to enlighten his students to the energy-connecting dynamism that an artist embraces, not to copy it but to transcend it in their own graphic voice. The class would end with tea and molasses crisps while students received an individual critique of their night's work. No student's effort was ever found to be without some forward progress and possibility. All were encouraged to accept their painting's potential at that time and to build upon it during their next effort.

*Binney later continued his study with Sam Feinstein in New York. Today, he carves large-scale granite sculptures in the Massachusetts Berkshires and recently exhibited two works in the Springside Chestnut Hill Academy show of 2019.*



## My Father's Lasting Lessons on Art by Sascha Feinstein

As a child, I viewed my father with near-mythic reverence. There was, of course, our startling age difference (he was 48 when I was born) but, far more than that, I felt genuinely awed by his authoritative command of art, both as a painter and a teacher. I loved listening to him speak to his students—especially at the end of each class, when he'd discuss their work—because I valued the voice of brilliance, and it pleased me to witness so much adulation.

Beyond that, I realized early on that I was absorbing invaluable lessons about the nature of art—all arts, not just painting—and many of those lessons have shaped my own efforts to teach (in my case, creative writing). He worked tirelessly, for example, to have students embrace the canvas as an organic whole, not just a sum of inarticulate parts, and therefore to view a canvas holistically rather than concentrate on minor portions. This tends to be a pitfall in poetry workshops, at all levels, where students eagerly quibble over isolated words before first discussing the nature of the poem being discussed. Why does that happen? Because it's easier and, I suppose, comforting: one can be confident about a typo long before one can understand a work's emotional spirit. And so my father would frequently begin by asking a student, "Would you say this painting is more wintery or summery?" In doing so, the painter was forced to assess the essence of the painting before picking at smaller issues.

Of course, in order to achieve a united whole one must work at the problematic passages, and here, too, I learned a great deal about art in general from listening to my father teach painting. Sometimes, for example, he would say to a student, "Okay, let me show you something just to prove you're not perfect." (This inevitably provoked a humble chuckle.) Then he'd borrow the person's palette knife, add a bit of paint, and make a small addition to the edge of their canvas. He'd explain the importance of color touching the boundaries, the extra impact that had upon the eye, how you can stretch a gesture beyond the limitations of the canvas itself by energizing the framework. The effect upon a student's work was often astounding.

One can see this principle dramatically in play in all his work, including the acrylic on display titled *Rising*. Its seasonal identity is undeniably that of summer, and pushing against that sunniness are passages of green that, in their opposition, create both tension and movement. They surge from the lower left-hand corner and are then picked up by green on the right edge that then ascends until it is finally released in a sliver at the painting's peak. And the impact of this drama—the ascendancy that inspired the work's title—is largely dependent upon the placement of that opposing color at the highlighted extremes.

This lesson in craft is by no means limited to the visual arts. If we consider the mechanics of poetry, the edges of a canvas might be compared to line and stanza breaks. A word at the end of a line inevitably has more impact upon the eye; a word at the end of a stanza resonates still more. Here, for example, is a passage from David Wojahn's "Satin Doll," where he's describing a pregnant aunt suffering through a divorce:



*Detail of Rising, 1970s*

It's the year  
she carries the novels and notebooks  
into the backyard to burn them, and when she finishes  
her dress and apron are covered with ashes, rising  
  
in what she wants to call a pillar of fire  
but it is only smoke on a damp day.

Because the stanza breaks on "rising," the word itself begins to rise, buoyed by all the white space surrounding it. Look at an alternative:

her dress and apron are covered with ashes,

rising in what she wants to call . . .

Placed below, the word no longer achieves the same mobility of smoke and ash.



Apart from listening to my father teach, I learned about art by watching him paint. During my lifetime, at least, the majority of his painting took place in the summer months on Cape Cod, where he'd retreat to his studio in the woods. Here he'd pin several large canvases onto Homasote boards and address them collectively; he also had much smaller sheets of paper on a low table and worked on those as well. His setup dismantled the clichéd image of the artist standing behind a solitary easel and provided instead a wise approach to avoiding creative stagnancy: If you're stuck on one project, move to another.

The last lesson about art that I learned came late in his life. It was summer. He would have been deep into his seventies. As usual, he had spent the entire morning in his studio and had returned to the house for lunch. But that day he radiated anger. I asked him what was wrong, and he spat out an inexact reply: "It never gets any easier!"

I didn't ask for clarification. (I had learned from childhood not to touch hot kettles.) But I imagine him in his studio, struggling to create cohesive statements and feeling temporarily stymied. What artist, in any field, does not experience such moments of frustration and doubt? Yet the memory will forever be fresh and engaging because I have known very few artists who share his confident, focused vision. This was Thor suddenly unable to throw his hammer, and I sometimes tell this story to students who, in their marvelous youth, think that struggle is somehow relegated to the inexperienced. I've come to consider my father's fury as being illuminating and inspiring.

That day he ate his lunch in silence. Then, when he rose from the table to return to his studio, I said, "I hope it goes better." He didn't reply. He didn't need to.

*Sascha Feinstein is a poet, essayist, and editor whose 12 books include Wreckage: My Father's Legacy of Art & Junk. The founding editor of Brilliant Corners: A Journal of Jazz & Literature, he is the Robert L. & Charlene Shangraw Professor of English at Lycoming College. [www.SaschaFeinstein.com](http://www.SaschaFeinstein.com).*



Sam in action. Photo courtesy of Sascha Feinstein.



*Harbor*, 1947. Private collection of Bunny and Paul Fitzgerald

## Works Exhibited in the Barbara Crawford Art Gallery at Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*All works, unless otherwise stated, are by Sam Feinstein.*



*Young Woman in Blue*, 1930s  
Oil on canvas, 25 x 18 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Market AM*, 1930s  
Watercolor, 14.5 x 20 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Factories*, 1930s  
Watercolor, 17.5 x 23 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Immigrants*, 1930s  
Oil on canvas board, 20 x 30 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Market*, 1930  
Lithograph, 10.75 x 17 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Self-portrait*, early 1930s  
Pen and ink, 7 x 5 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Aladdin and his Magic Lamp*,  
c. 1934  
Watercolor, 11.5 x 8 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Little Red Riding Hood*, c. 1934  
Casein, 4.75 x 3.75 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Sleeping Beauty*, 1935  
Watercolor, Pen and Ink, 10.5 x 15 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Don Quixote*, 1935  
Casein, 10.75 x 8.5 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Railroad Bridge at Girard Avenue*,  
1936  
Pen and ink, 10 x 6.25 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*They Amuse Themselves—They Do  
Not Sing, They Do Not Dance*, 1939,  
Print, 9 x 12 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Worry*, 1940  
Casein, 20.5 x 14 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust



*After the Party*, 1940s  
Linoleum block print, 12 x 15 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Air Raid*, c. 1941  
Aquatint, 6.75 x 5 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*The Threat of War*, c. 1941  
Charcoal, 18 x 12 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Terror*, 1942  
Casein and pastel, 18 x 24 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Untitled*, c. 1943  
Charcoal, 20 x 16 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Loading Ambulance*, 1943  
Casein, 7.5 X 10 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Rest in Pieces*, 1945  
Reproduction for the *Medical Soldier*  
V-E Day Edition, 1945  
Original in graphite and charcoal,  
16.5 x 11 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Harbor*, 1947  
Casein and pastel, 18 x 24 in.  
Private Collection of Bunny and  
Paul Fitzgerald

*Harbor*, 1947  
Casein and pastel, 20 x 26 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Boats*, 1947  
Gouache on paper, 10.25 x 13.5 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Still Life*, late 1940s  
Oil on plywood, 30 x 38 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Untitled*, c. 1949  
Reproduction of the original  
created with layers of oil pastel,  
crayon, and casein, 18 x 24 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Waterfall*, 1949–50  
Oil pastel on board, 22 x 28 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Black Walnuts*, 1950  
Woodblock print with red ink  
dedication to Barbara Crawford  
12 x 18 in.  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Black Walnuts*, 1950  
Woodblock print, 12 x 18 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Untitled Figure*, 1952  
Oil on bristol board, created in Hans  
Hofmann's class, 26 x 20 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Gold Abstract 1*, 1952  
Paint on paper, 29.5 x 39.5 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Untitled*, c. 1952  
Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 in.  
Similar style as *The Window* by  
Hans Hofmann  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Untitled*, mid 1950s  
Casein and pastel, 22 x 28 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Untitled*, c. 1950s  
Oil on board, 38 x 41 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Rising*, 1970s  
Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41 in.  
Samuel L. Feinstein Trust

*Abstract 2*, 1957  
Paint on board, 30 x 40 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy

*Abstract 3*, 1972  
Oil on canvas, 46.5 x 68 in.  
Barbara Crawford  
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy



Sam painting on Cape Cod



*Factories, 1930s*

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*Railroad Bridge at Girard Avenue, 1936*





*Rising*, 1970s





*Untitled, c. 1952*

