

They called me Mayer July

Date : October 24, 2007

I'd like to draw your attention to a project which has just come to fruition by Barbara Kirschenblatt Gimblett: the publication of the book, *They called me Mayer July*, and opening of the exhibition of the same name.

"The only Jew in the volunteer fire brigade."

Barbara's father, Mayer Kirschenblatt taught himself to paint, aged 73, and has created an evocative visual record of his life in Poland before World War Two and his emigration to Canada. Drawing on interviews conducted over decades and in Mayer's own words, the book and exhibition are a visual ethnography of Polish Jewish life, and highlights the redemptive power of art as a medium to not only evoke memory and narrate life histories, but to reconnect to the past and to broader cultural histories.

The project has a website:

<http://samanthamyers.typepad.com/theycalledmemayerjuly/>

The exhibition will travel from California, to Poland, to Amsterdam and New York City.

BKG discusses the project:

http://samanthamyers.typepad.com/theycalledmemayerjuly/daughters_afterword.html

Mayer Kirschenblatt has also recorded an audio narrative which can be accessed through the website, and for US visitors, by calling a cellphone number

<http://samanthamyers.typepad.com/theycalledmemayerjuly/2007/09/listen-to-mayer.html>